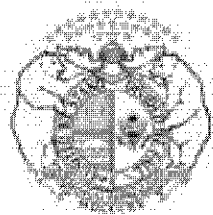


A stylized, artistic illustration in the background. It features several open books with pages that have a dotted texture. One book in the foreground has a large orange circle with a green leaf on its page. A magnifying glass is positioned over the bottom right, focusing on the text area. The overall color palette is soft, with blues, yellows, and oranges.

Lifetime Connections to Literacy

A collection of literacy resources
for public libraries in Missouri

**Matt Blunt
Secretary of State
Missouri State Library**



For more information, contact:
Office of the Secretary of State
Missouri State Library
600 West Main Street
PO Box 387
Jefferson City, MO 65102



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STATE OF MISSOURI

JAMES C. KIRKPATRICK
STATE INFORMATION CENTER
(573) 751-4936

MISSOURI STATE LIBRARY
(573) 751-2751

February 2005

Dear Missouri Librarians:

Literacy skills are at the very foundation of our form of government. Informed and educated citizens are essential to representative democracy. Literacy is basic to the voting process, both in terms of allowing citizens to gather and use information about candidates and issues and in actually following instructions and casting a vote. Literacy affects almost all of the important issues in our lives. It is necessary for us as we support our families, become informed consumers, and avoid unscrupulous financial schemes. It is a health issue, and the health care system has a heightened awareness of the links between literacy, health, and healthy lifestyle management. The value of total literacy is high in this information age.

Overall, the literacy demands for productive and successful daily life are rising, yet we know too many of our fellow Missourians falter under those demands. Low-literate adults are too often unemployed, among the working poor, in need of social services, or part of the prison population. Many children with reading problems drop out, develop negative behavior, and suffer social and self-esteem problems. Even some people who can read are aliterate; that is, they can read but they do not. They never take advantage of the rich store of information and experience preserved in print, and so they are little better off than those who cannot read. Building literacy is an important task in every community.

Public libraries are natural partners in the quest for a more literate Missouri. By their very existence they are a force for literacy. Libraries support literacy development in their patrons, especially beginning readers. They nurture literacy activity in their communities and encourage those who can read to benefit from that skill. Libraries are rightly called "the people's university." They are effectively working to bridge the digital divide.

I am pleased that the State Library, which is part of the Secretary of State's Office, can offer this literacy notebook to the public libraries of Missouri to assist them as they increase their efforts in their communities.

Sincerely,

Robin Carnahan
Secretary of State

Acknowledgements

Libraries are naturally in the literacy business, and this volume is dedicated to the efforts libraries make in support of literacy. Those of you who are interested and involved in expanding the role of libraries in literacy will no doubt find this handbook useful in your efforts.

Much of the material in this handbook comes from Missouri experience. Missouri authors, librarians, and consultants wrote many of the activities. The Missouri State Library's former literacy consultant, Karen Jones, spent many, many hours researching and compiling the variety of materials found here. Before she left the State Library to develop the adult reading curriculum at a local college, Karen expressed her respect and admiration for the efforts put forth by libraries and her desire that libraries across the state would find this handbook to be a valuable tool for shaping their literacy work.

There were about three dozen people from approximately fifteen public libraries who attended meetings and reviewed drafts of this handbook. The State Library is grateful to those who offered their assistance, and wishes to thank all those who attended literacy gatherings or other meetings that helped to shape the content. Thanks also to people who support libraries, and to each of you who serve library patrons day by day.

The State Library is pleased to have Marge Kudrna, a retired school library media specialist from Jefferson City, as our new consultant for literacy issues. Marge is eager to use her wealth of experience to help shape the future of literacy efforts in Missouri libraries.

Perhaps you have seen a quote from Margaret Mead that says, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Here's to librarians who are making the world better for the individuals they serve.

Literacy Notebook Contents

The intent of this notebook is to help public libraries increase their literacy activity and focus. A series of meetings with public librarians gave it shape and organization. Participants agreed that this project should be a flexible set of resources rather than a treatise on literacy in libraries, that it should be more a toolkit than a textbook.

So, as defined in input meetings with public library staff members, this notebook offers a collection of ideas and resources. It is in loose-leaf form so librarians may use the pieces one at a time, reorganize the material for better local use, or add materials and notes as programming develops and new resources are discovered.

The sections, separated by dividers, are:

1. Introductory Notes About Literacy In Libraries
2. Introducing Literacy: Serving Preschoolers And Their Families
3. Supporting Reading Instruction: Serving Early Elementary School Students
4. Supporting Independent Reading: Serving Upper Elementary School Students
5. Creating Lifelong Readers: Serving Young Adults With Literacy In Mind
6. Second Chances At Literacy: Serving Low-Literate Adults
7. Appendices: More Resources And General Handouts

The notebook focuses on literacy for native speakers of English. Some activities will also support English language literacy for patrons learning English as a foreign language. Although low English proficiency produces problems similar to those caused by low literacy among English speakers, the causes of the two problems are different and the remedies are also rather different. Because of time and space constraints, the focus of this notebook is literacy for patrons who already speak English.

Organizational Notes

The notebook is organized primarily by age groups, since that is how we usually organize our library services. In each age group section there are three kinds of materials.

- Each section begins with notes for librarians. They offer a summary of literacy principles and ideas that might guide us as we support literacy from libraries. In some sections they include general information.
- The second kind of material offers ideas for activities and resources, and in some cases, sample plans for activities. The activity and resource sections for most age groups include ideas from public libraries in Missouri.
- The third set of pages in most sections is a group of reproducible handout masters. These reproducible information pages serve two purposes. First, they convey information to librarians in brief form. Second, they provide materials for patrons and attendees at library programs. Some of these handouts, particularly the ones for parents, contain the same information in different forms, and in a few cases the same handout is in two sections of the handbook if it applies to more than one age group. The reasoning for including both was that the same information might be useful more than once, the library might need handouts for more than one event on the same topic, or librarians might wish to choose between handouts on the same topic.
- An appendix includes some general information that applies to all age groups.

Pages are not numbered sequentially, although multi-page articles and information use the “page *x* of *y*” numbering convention. As directed in input meetings, the information is in loose-leaf form so libraries can add, subtract, or rearrange information for best local use. The individually reproducible pages also account for the decision not to mark pages with numbers that would not make sense when a single page was reproduced.

Section One

Introductory Notes About Literacy in Libraries

Why would libraries be interested in literacy?

In a hardheaded practical sense, the future of libraries depends on literacy. Almost everything that lets a patron use and enjoy the library is dependent on literacy. When we try to help the people in our communities become fully literate, we are simply increasing the number of people who can use our libraries in the future. But it goes beyond that.

Nationally, society is concerned about English language literacy. While literacy levels among native speakers in the United States are not declining, society now requires a level of literacy for survival, self-sufficiency, and success that is much beyond what was necessary even a few decades ago. Society has “raised the bar” for literacy accomplishment, and an alarming number of Americans in the United States are not reaching the higher level.

Libraries increasingly talk about providing “access.” We stretch ourselves to provide electronic access to the Internet and to ever more databases. We use interlibrary loan and document delivery to give our patrons access to materials not in the local collection. We form union catalogues to help our patrons access materials from other places. Since most of what we provide depends on print, literacy is the most essential access mechanism of all. To provide full access we may choose to support our patrons’ literacy skills.

The idea of public libraries as a source of literacy programs, efforts, activities, and support is hardly new. Over a century ago the idea of planting a public library in each community was part of educational and social trends that started after the Civil War and grew stronger at the turn of the 20th century. The public library was seen as an extension of public education, an opportunity for self-education, and a service to educate people trying to rise to the American dream. The library field as a whole is expressing new interest in literacy. The American Library Association has identified literacy as a key area for the 21st century. There was library participation at the National Literacy Summit of 2000.

For Missouri’s children, public, private, and home schools provide direct literacy instruction, but resources and situations differ from place to place. In some parts of Missouri there are active direct-instruction adult literacy efforts through public schools, state-funded adult education classes, community colleges, and local literacy councils. In other parts of the state there are large gaps in adult literacy services. Missouri is not a state in which literacy funding flows through libraries. Libraries in Missouri that offer focused literacy services are generally doing that out of a sense of mission or local commitment. Literacy situations are different from community to community.

Perhaps there is not a single universal answer how libraries in Missouri should involve themselves in literacy work. Where other services are good, duplications may be unnecessary and the library may choose an active literacy support role. Where other services don’t exist, libraries may be the best agency to provide them. Nothing forbids direct instruction from a library. The connection between reading and libraries is immutable.

There is more to literacy work than direct instruction. There are multiple factors involved in the literacy level of a community and in raising literacy levels. The diagram below conceptualizes one way to look at the interaction of literacy factors.

A Place for Libraries as Literacy Agencies

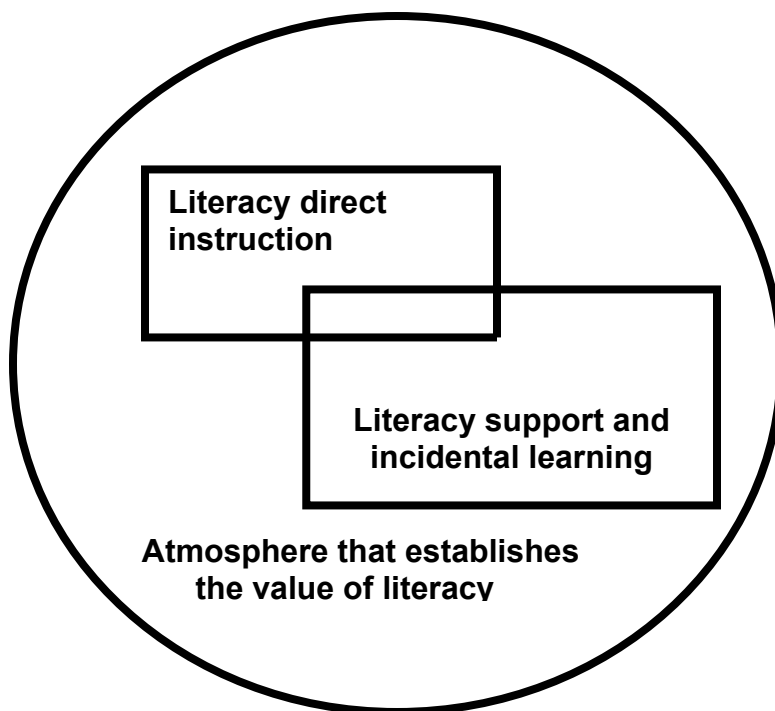


Diagram from Karen R. Jones, Missouri State Library
Please include credit if reproduced.

While only a few libraries in Missouri may find it possible or appropriate to offer direct literacy instruction, all of Missouri's public libraries are in a natural position to offer literacy support and affect a culture that supports literacy. This contribution should not be overlooked or devalued. Research increasingly indicates that instructional methods alone may not produce full literacy and that support and daily experience with literacy are vital factors in achievement.

Literacy instruction and literacy support overlap and interact. The importance of what children already know about reading when they enter school is now recognized as a vital factor in reading achievement. A few children learn to read without formal instruction, and they are almost always children who have had a great deal of literacy exposure and support. Unhappily, and more commonly, some children reach formal literacy instruction without good literacy support, and for them regular instruction is often inadequate. Children without early exposure to books are already at a disadvantage when they enter kindergarten. Books hold new vocabulary, offer background knowledge, increase language development, and introduce the basic concepts of print and text. When adults read books to children they are increasing the children's knowledge of all those things. They are also building a warm bond and good feelings about reading that

later become motivation to help children persevere until they do learn to read well on their own. Children's author and literacy consultant Mem Fox asserts that children need to have heard at least 1,000 stories by the time they enter school. By providing a rich variety of books and other story materials, and by encouraging parents to read to their children, libraries may play a larger role than we had previously thought in children's acquisition of literacy skills. Literacy support in the early years is not optional enrichment, but direct preparation for literacy and literacy instruction.

Once reading instruction begins, children need books and texts in order to practice what they are learning and become more fluent readers. In reading circles it is now axiomatic that once children have some grasp of the reading process, they become better readers by simply reading. With reading, as with so many other things, practice builds skill. Time spent reading improves reading achievement. This principle holds through adolescence and even into adulthood. So, through children's collections, summer reading programs, family activities, and programming for all ages, libraries move our patrons toward literacy simply by giving them access to print materials and encouraging them to spend time reading and improve reading skill in the process.

Finally, activities that support both literacy and formal instruction occur in an atmosphere that either values or devalues literacy. This can be crucial since motivation and the amount of literate activity that surrounds young people are now recognized as basic factors in whether they achieve literacy. Our society decries our literacy problem, but in many ways the same society does not encourage the acquisition of literacy. Social pressures and media messages that devalue literacy and disdain school achievement hamper the literacy achievement of too many children, especially minority and at-risk children. Yet, after allowing and even sending the messages that reading is not really important, society demands that young people have good literacy skills to succeed as adults. Not becoming fully literate puts many children at a severe disadvantage for life. The mixed messages are not helping us attain literacy as a nation. By inviting children early into the world of stories, information, books, and learning, libraries counter this trend. Children's programs draw school children into reading in ways that are fun and pleasant and send the message that books are treasures and reading is good. Teen Summer Reading adds "cool" to reading and learning, and our young adult collections widen the world for our teen patrons as well as improving their literacy. Adult programming meets a variety of needs through the vehicle of offering people things to read. By offering programming and recreational reading as well as information, libraries keep literate pursuits alive and observable and valuable in our communities.

In the same ways libraries help counter *aliteracy*, the condition of being able to read but not reading which leaves many people no better off in terms of their worldview than their low literate counterparts. By building interest in reading, by reminding the adults to support reading, and by cooperating with the community in providing options for adults who are not yet literate, libraries change the climate in favor of literacy. This is not a small thing to do for our fellow human beings.

In one sense, if the library is open and functioning it is in the literacy business. The body of current research indicates that simple exposure and access to attractive, interesting, and quality printed objects is a strong factor in literacy achievement. Library collections are a literacy effort

by their very nature. Libraries can address literacy in many ways through the process of simply being a library. Although state appropriations, funding streams, and other situations probably mean that direct instruction will not be the norm in Missouri's public libraries, libraries can increase the literacy focus and effects of their ongoing activities. We can shape what we already do to focus our services more directly on literacy attainment and enhancement.

Some educators make a distinction between incidental and intentional learning. Incidental learning is what happens from observations and experience without direct instruction. Intentional learning happens when a person deliberately sets out to learn something. Perhaps there is a useful analogy in library literacy efforts. Libraries are perfectly set up to facilitate incidental learning and we provide much incidental literacy support. Many libraries are trying to add intentional literacy support efforts and focused literacy improvement opportunities. This manual is born of the desire to focus and sharpen what we have done incidentally for years and make literacy services in libraries more intentional.

Libraries alone cannot change the literacy level of a community or the nation, but they can help tilt the balance toward literacy for some individuals, support literacy development in all patrons, especially young ones, nurture literacy in their communities, encourage those who are literate to benefit from that skill. Libraries can be an active force for literacy and all the benefits literacy brings with it.

A statement from ALA

21st Century Literacy is one of five key action areas adopted by the American Library Association to fulfill its mission of providing the highest quality library and information services for all people. Helping children and adults develop skills they need to fully participate in an information society—whether it's learning to read or explore the Internet—is central to that mission.

2001 Survey of Literacy Activities in Missouri Libraries

Although many library programs and almost all library services have some connections to literacy, the 2001 library literacy survey sought to identify and collect information about library efforts and activities that represent **intentional literacy programs**, that is, **efforts for which improving the English literacy of participants is the primary goal**.

We defined literacy first as enough skill with written English that a person can use reading and writing to gain knowledge and access information and human experience, both in the workplace and the community. We also noted that literacy indicates sufficient skill with the written system of English to function well in a literate English-speaking society, to use literacy as a tool to achieve goals and develop knowledge and potential. For a literate person, printed English is not an impediment. (Literacy is not an English-only phenomenon, but English is the common language of Missouri, so the survey dealt only with English language literacy.)

Ninety-eight library buildings responded to the survey. Some were branches and some were municipal or county libraries without branches. These 98 comprise a little over a fourth of the approximately 380 public library buildings in Missouri at that time and represented about a third of the public library systems in the state. We asked branches to respond individually because we realized that often services within a system vary from branch to branch depending on the neighborhood or community the branch is serving. Thus we felt that surveying by building rather than system would give a truer picture of the scope of literacy services.

The survey first asked about use of the building:

- ☐ 94% of the libraries responding indicated literacy related groups sometimes use their facilities.
- ☐ 58% of them said the library is a site for tutoring of some type.
- ☐ 10% have meeting space used by groups.
- ☐ 6% of the libraries responding house AEL classes. (AEL is the adult education program offered and funded through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Allowing a class to use library space can be a major contribution.)

We next asked about library staff time directed toward literacy or literacy support activities:

- ☐ 72% of the libraries responding make referrals to literacy programs and resources in their locales.
- ☐ 27% of the libraries have staff members who lend their expertise by doing presentations.
- ☐ 15% of the libraries responding have staff members who do some consulting.
- ☐ 27% of libraries responding said staffs are involved in program planning.
- ☐ 56% are directly involved in collaborations.

Materials, the time-honored standby of libraries, were the next category surveyed:

- ☐ 86% of the libraries responding to the survey report having materials at low reading levels suitable for some part of their patron community.

- ❑ 46% of the libraries responding to the survey reported having specific new reader collections for adults.
- ❑ Only a few reported having instructional materials for adults, but about half reported having materials that would complement or enhance a literacy curriculum.
- ❑ 86% of the library buildings responding have books on tape or CD and audio materials that would be useful to low level readers.

The section of the survey asking for brief descriptions of literacy activities indicated that activities to help children develop adequate reading skills were the dominant literacy programming of the libraries responding. The best-case literacy scenario is, of course, for children to leave elementary school with grade level reading skills, thus reducing or eliminating the need for adult literacy programs. This goal seems to be a natural fit with library programming, and some respondents used the comments section to point out the wealth of available materials even small libraries provide to help with literacy development in children.

In answer to the question, “What would help you increase your literacy efforts?” the most frequent response was “staff,” closely followed by “money.” The need for money to hire staff or free up staff time is evident, so in practice funding is indicated as the top need. Other respondents noted the need for training and for books and other materials, needs that are also related to funding in most cases. Information was another stated need, and is one the State Library has increased its efforts to address. Some respondents noted that their facilities were not adequate for or conducive to literacy activities. Some also responded that their “plates were full” and literacy services were not likely to be added without a drastic change in the situation. A few also noted that no requests or expressed needs for literacy services had been received in their libraries, so there would seem to be no need to expand a service not being requested by their user communities.

The “additional comments” section of the survey highlighted several issues that impact all library literacy efforts to some extent. Several library buildings pointed out that they had once had larger literacy programs, but as other community entities picked up similar literacy services the library shifted more to a support role. Others pointed out that in their community’s local literacy providers were not open to collaboration, and that neither competition nor duplication seemed helpful. The high loss of GED books and specific literacy materials was mentioned along with the general unattractiveness and low circulation rates of new reader adult collections. The fact that low-literate adults often do not continue in tutoring after an agency went to considerable trouble to set up instruction was mentioned. Many comments emphasized the issues mentioned previously of too few staff and the lack of a dependable funding stream. The need to expand services for non-English-proficient community members was mentioned. Services for home school families were also mentioned as a literacy connection for children and young people.

While we must be careful not to overgeneralize from responses given by about a fourth of the library buildings in Missouri, a general picture does emerge from this 2001 survey, and it is consistent with anecdotal reports and previous survey results gathered by the Missouri State Library. When libraries have adequate space for group meetings they seem generous in sharing it. Library literacy efforts seem to vary from community to community, depending on other

local efforts and resources. (Since libraries in Missouri have much local control, this is a pattern we might expect to continue.) The dominant form of literacy programming in libraries seems to be support for developing literacy in children and young people. In a few places, however, libraries play major roles in supporting and sustaining literacy services for adults, and others have played this role historically by supporting literacy efforts that later became self sustaining. The lack of a steady funding stream for alternative literacy efforts and literacy support, a situation often noted by local literacy councils and volunteer literacy groups as well, also affects libraries negatively.

Advantages of a LIBRARY-BASED Literacy Program

- ☞ That's where the books are!
- ☞ That's where people who are crusaders for reading are!
- ☞ The public library is a safe haven – non-threatening to parents and to children – providing a positive setting without an institutional stigma attached.
- ☞ Librarians love books and reading and avidly promote and model the joy of reading to others.
- ☞ Other wonderful materials are found at the library; families who go there can access these, such as computers, videos, books on tape, large print books, and dictionaries.
- ☞ The public library is THE “life-long learning institution” which will never graduate or promote you out of its services; you can always use the library no matter how old or how young you are, how educated or uneducated.
- ☞ Libraries are community centers where individuals with all levels of education come for information.
- ☞ Libraries provide for the developmental literacy needs of children and of adults.
- ☞ Children who discover the world of reading at the library will continue to access it for the rest of their lives.
- ☞ Public libraries are FREE and in nearly every community!
- ☞ Many public libraries are open nights and weekends (even Sundays) so they are accessible to working parents.
- ☞ Most public libraries provide entertaining, informative, and fun programs for children as well as for the entire family.
- ☞ Children and adults can correlate their books with each other by subject or genre, thus encouraging family discussions and experiences.
- ☞ Public libraries are non-discriminatory. They have “something for everyone!”

*Reprinted with permission from Dr. Carole Talan, long-time library literacy specialist, California State Library.
January 2003*

Founding and Funding Literacy Programs (Neal-Schuman, 1999.)

FIVE LITERACY PRINCIPLES FOR LIBRARIES

1. Early exposure to literacy objects and literacy activities is very important for later achievement in literacy and in school.
2. Reading is a language function. Anything that helps build vocabulary helps build literacy. Anything that helps children use language in a variety of ways or develops the ability to tell a story and participate in a conversation helps build literacy.
3. Background knowledge is necessary to make meaning from text; it can come from books, stories, and book-related activities as well as direct experience.
4. Once a person has some reading ability, time spent reading builds literacy skill. Recreational reading builds literacy at any age.
5. Motivation matters. Pleasant experiences with reading increase the time a learner spends reading and the effort a learner is willing to expend on reading. Therefore good experiences with books help build literacy.

Guiding library collections with literacy in mind:

- The motivation of attractive and interesting material a literacy learner can read encourages reading and builds reading fluency.
- For readers at all levels, time spent reading increases reading skill and attractive usable materials are linked to time spent reading.
- Materials of high interest and low reading level must often be chosen purposefully and individually. Audio books and other recordings have value in building literacy.
- New Readers or those struggling with literacy must be able to find usable material easily.

Guiding library activities with literacy in mind:

- Programming may not require literacy skill, but it can make literacy attractive. Programming can motivate reading; interest in reading increases time spent reading, which in turn builds literacy skill. Programming connects reading and life.
- Programming can build background skill for literacy or background knowledge for reading comprehension.
- Word games, rhymes, and songs help children grasp the sounds of language, an understanding they need later to use phonics.
- Talking about something that has been read builds the reader's ability to make meaning from text.
- Activities involving rereading, retelling, or writing build reading skill. Choral reading, dramatic reading, readers theater, puppetry, or staged interviews with the characters in a story all help reading skill. Activities such as predicting, summarizing, comparing, reacting, discussing alternate endings, or seeking background knowledge on a topic build comprehension.
- Anything that encourages anybody to read builds literacy.

Literacy Numbers for Missouri Public School Students

2003 MAP scores for reading

These are statewide averages; urban figures show less achievement.

Proficient or advanced (above grade level)

32.7% 3rd graders,

30.6 % 7th graders,

21.4% 11th graders.

Nearing proficiency (about grade level)

39.5% 3rd graders,

31.3 % 7th graders,

42.8% 11th graders.

Step 1 and progressing (below grade level)

26.4% 3rd graders,

36.3 % 7th graders,

35.4% 11th graders.

Missouri graduation rate 2003: 83.9%

Missouri yearly dropout rate 2003: 3.68%

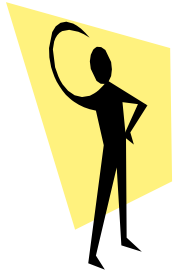
Missouri non-graduation rate 2003: 16.1%

MAP test scores and other data for individual school districts are found at

<http://dese.mo.gov/schooldata/>.

Use the column on the right to “Make a Selection” and choose the district. Scroll down to, and highlight the name of the district from the box “Alphabetical List of School Districts.” (You may also search a separate box for charter schools.) Click the “load profile” gray box.

Each district page will be divided into categories for information. MAP scores are in the Educational Performance Data. You may have to scroll down to reach that section. Click on the name of the MAP section you want to view. (Reading is part of Communication Arts.) Other statistics for that school district (graduation rates annual dropout rates, accreditation, etc.) are also on that page.



Literacy Statistics in Missouri in 2004

Literacy statistics are not hard data or precise numbers, but if we look at enough of them they show us a fairly consistent picture for Missouri. The numbers indicate that about 18% of adult Missourians have a problematic literacy level.

The National Adult Literacy Survey of 1992 (NALS) found 17% of Missourians in the lowest levels of literacy achievement. (This figure included non-native speakers of English.) The next National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL 2003) is in process; Missouri is in the sample.

Census 2000 reports that 18.7% of the adults over 25 in Missouri, 679,095 people, lack a high school diploma. In 2003, 7,186 Missourians earned a GED.

The overall non-graduation rate in Missouri's public schools was 15%-19% in the last five years, 15.8% in 2003, higher in some areas. It has been falling for several years, which means the graduation rate is rising. The yearly dropout rate in Missouri's public schools was 3.68% in 2003; it is higher in urban areas.

2003 MAP scores showed 26.4% of public school 11th graders were well below grade level (Step 1 or Progressing), which suggests they are low literate.

In the United States, absolute illiteracy in native-born, non-disabled adults is infrequent. Low literacy (insufficient literacy for the demands of life and economic survival) is the way literacy professionals describe the problem, and it is a current issue.

Overall literacy levels in the USA are steady, at least among non-disabled native speakers. The literacy demands of daily survival are rising so quickly that people are failing to meet them; this has harsher consequences than it once did.

In FY-01, 49% of Missourians receiving public assistance lacked a high school diploma or GED.

In 2002, 54% of incarcerated offenders in Missouri lacked a high school diploma or its equivalent.

2.7% of Missouri's population in 2000 was foreign born (an 80.8% increase over 1990) and about half of them reported speaking English less than well. It is not entirely clear from numbers how many low-literate adults are immigrants and how many of them were born in the USA. Non-native speakers continue to arrive.

The way averages are figured means that statewide averages may not be representative of a given community or population.

Literacy statistics alone tell us little about the cause of low literacy for any individual or group.

Section Two

Introducing Literacy: Serving Preschoolers and their Families

Literacy notes for libraries serving preschoolers

The debate about the best ways to teach reading once children are in school continues, but most researchers now agree that reading skill, like so many other things, begins in infancy with parents and primary caregivers. Early exposure to language and print in context and in relationship seems crucial. First, children need experiences that develop their language capacity. Second, they need to be read to and exposed to print so they can begin to learn what text is for, how it works, and why it matters. Libraries can play a major role in both.

In order for emergent literacy skills to develop, children need to explore language that is sung, spoken, recited and written. It is available, knowledgeable, and willing adults who provide babies and toddlers with the experiences that encourage emergent literacy...Library-based family literacy programs designed for the very young can have a powerful two-fold effect. First, children fall in love with books and with libraries as the source of books. Second, because young children cannot get to the library by themselves ...adults who might never visit a library on their own come because it is fun for the children - and wily librarians find ways to captivate them, too.

Jennifer Birckmayer, Department of Human Development Cornell University, In Zero to Three, December 2000/January 2001, page 26.

Reading is first of all a language function. It involves the sounds of language, the structure of language, and the meaning of language. If language is not sufficiently developed, reading will be non-sense to a child. Most beginning reading instruction relies on showing children how words they know look in print and how sentences they understand are written or printed. Children who have been read to have a head start in this process. They usually have larger vocabularies and a better sense of how the English language fits together. There was a study of vocabulary that concluded that children's books have richer, more complex vocabulary than prime time television. Books that extend the vocabulary a child already has categories for, for example, books that include many kinds of vegetables or animals or weather, seem to be useful to expand vocabulary. Although we tell children that what they see on a page is "talking written down," the patterns of spoken and written language are often quite different. Children who have been read to also have a head start in knowing how the patterns of written language sound and work. Simple familiarity with the language of books is a large literacy advantage that begins early and extends well into the school years.

Unless a child has an adequate sense of the sounds of language and how they fit together, the child probably cannot benefit from phonics instruction, and spelling will make very little sense. Researchers call the awareness of sounds and how they go together phonemic awareness or phonological awareness. It is one of the newer subjects in the reading debates, and poor phonological awareness may help explain why some children have trouble when they try to "sound out" words.

In addition, some theorists hold that the most decisive factor in how well and how quickly a child learns to read is what the child already knows about books and how print works before the child enters school. When children watch as an adult reads, they learn many things. They learn that books always open the same way and that the print goes left to right. They learn

that the words are in the letters, not the pictures. They learn that the marks called letters are always the same, but the words and story are different in each book. They learn print is stable; that is, the words are different from book to book but the same in any given book each time it is read. They may learn to recognize certain constellations of letters as words. They begin to discriminate between letter shapes and names. When children watch the adults in their lives use writing and reading every day, the children learn that writing and reading are useful and important. Young children naturally want to imitate the adults who matter to them, and when their adults read and write, children want to read and write, too. And most of all, children who are read to and witness reading and writing learn that literacy is a good thing, a pleasant thing, and an important thing.

Dr Susan B. Neuman of the University of Michigan asserts:

Public libraries are well positioned to expose children to great quantities of print and meaningful language opportunities during the crucial preschool and elementary school years. Research shows that children need exposure to a wide variety of high-quality books of various topics, genres, and perspectives in order to acquire literacy skills. They also need books that reflect the diverse and multicultural nature of our society – books in which they can see themselves and others like them. (*The Role of Public Libraries in Children's Literacy Development*, page 10.)

So – how can the library collection and library programming help our youngest patrons begin the journey toward literacy?

The Collection

The crucial, primary thing libraries can do for the future literacy of infants and young children is to make books available to them and encourage the adults in their lives to read to the children. Libraries can make a wonderful array of attractive, interesting books available. Small children are drawn to bright, interesting objects, and that attraction may translate into lasting associations between books and interest and good feelings.

Some libraries are adding board books to the collection. While infants treat them more as toys than as books, they do learn about the books and develop a fondness for them. While infants cannot follow a plot line, they can recognize pictures and begin to learn about the world around them, and the words that describe the world. When a caregiver holds the child and reads or talks about the board book, the child learns about language and reading. This expands the sense of how to “play” with the book.

Most selection tools include guidance for picking out appropriate books for each stage of preschool development. This handbook contains a brief guide for choosing books at different stages with literacy skills in mind. Different features appeal to different children and different stages. Familiar themes and objects, bright simple pictures, clear simple words, and simple plot lines are helpful for the youngest children. Books can be more complex as children get older.

Book choices can also reflect children's pleasure at seeing people like themselves in books. Literacy is a diversity issue in several ways. School achievement, one indication of literacy,

still tends to break along economic and social lines. Diversity in our collections makes the statement that literacy is for everybody. One thing that places some children “at risk” is catching a community or peer group attitude that reading and writing are unnecessary frills, “uncool,” other people’s values, and other people’s words. On the other hand, the attitude that some groups of people aren’t capable of high intellectual or educational achievement also persists in some circles. Cultural, ethnic, social, and life-style diversity reflected in our collections quietly sends the sometimes-counter-cultural message that literacy can be for everybody everywhere. (Diversity in our collections makes other important statements as well.)

Anything that libraries or other organizations can do to simply put books into the hands and homes of children – the earlier the better - helps literacy. Offering books for checkout is still the primary way libraries do this, but libraries also find other ways to put books into the hands of children. Various libraries have tried book giveaways, book boxes that rotate to daycare centers, teacher cards that let a teacher check out quantities of books for a classroom, providing books for other reading programs, and spearheading book drives for schools or daycare centers.

Programming

The move toward programs for babies and toddlers is a good one in terms of literacy. Librarians are not only providing early reading experiences benefiting the children, but also helping parents know how to interact and use books and language with their children.

Librarians can introduce children and parents to word-sound play such as rhymes and alliterations (same sound beginnings) and rhythm games such as finger plays and clapping rhymes. (Rhythm is related to the sense of syllables and the flow of language.) There are many sources for verbal games, poems, and rhymes.

An effective word game for kindergarteners is to teach sound blending as a guessing game. Say “f-aw-l” and have the child guess the word (fall). Then let the child try out a word like “ff-ih-sh” on you. This strengthens the basic skill of sounding out words.

Talk with children in the library and as part of library events. Help parents and caregivers talk with children. Interactive language use is necessary for language development. After the librarian reads the story time book, he or she can go back and invite children to talk about it. Model talking about it, not only asking questions about the story, but also reacting and discussing it simply. Engage older preschoolers in language play such as conversations between puppets, jokes, and telling stories.

Interactive activities such as talking about wordless books, discussing pictures, and talking while playing with toys seem to be effective in building vocabulary and language facility. This elaborates on the language in the book and extends skills. Early on, librarians can describe pictures or ask and answer, “What happened?” When children are a little older, actual discussions of how characters felt, and connections to other books or events in the

children's lives become possible. Librarians model this behavior for parents who come to library programs. While this behavior comes naturally to some parents, others need to be shown how it works. Often library programming primarily reaches parents who already have some grasp of how to help their children develop language and reading skills; they come to the library because they know the importance of what goes on there. The library's literacy challenge is to help parents who don't already know how to practice early literacy activities take advantage of what the library can offer their children. Outreach programs that take ideas and resources and new patterns of interaction to parents at places like Head Start, teen parent sites, or a family literacy program may truly change the literacy future for some children.

Talking about books with older preschoolers may have another school-related benefit. Children must learn the many different uses of language along with the language itself. Language behaviors, such as asking obvious questions about illustrations or telling children to recap what happened in a book, are different from the way language is used in other situations. Children may be unfamiliar with such uses of language, even if they know the words being used. Asking a child to reiterate what a story just said (for example, "What did Peter do?") or asking for information the adult already knows (for example, "What color is that cat?") may not seem sensible to a child who is not familiar with this kind of verbal interaction. There is evidence that one reason some children have trouble in school is they have not learned this particular type of verbal give-and-take. Library programs can offer children practice with this special use of language and prepare them for the way schools use books and other literacy objects. Learning how to manage the verbal interactions in a school setting can help children do well in school, which is where most literacy instruction occurs.

Another way librarians can help children with early literacy is to ask open-ended questions about the books they read. Open-ended questions are queries without a simple yes/no answer. Questions like "Who can tell me about winter?" "What could Max do about...?" "What would happen if ...?" and "What will happen next?" help children develop language, connect with what they read, and talk about the ways the text connects with their lives.

While children are getting the foundation for reading, they are also acquiring the foundation for writing. Programming can include opportunities for children to use crayons and markers, and write their versions of their names and other words. When children understand they can represent a message with marks on paper, they are building basic concepts of print literacy. Children learn about many facets of life by pretending: inviting them to pretend they are literate lays groundwork for the real thing.

Programs for parents and caregivers are also important. Libraries can help adults do the things that give children a good literacy base. If the library pairs with a group like Head Start or a family literacy center, programming may include actually teaching parents and caregivers how to read to children.

So much comes back to this: read to children and encourage everybody in the children's lives to read to them. Read to children in a pleasant, meaningful way while holding the book so they can see it and then talk about what you have read. It not only builds the base for literacy but also helps overall knowledge and intellectual development.

Libraries help give small children experiences that become motivation to expend the effort to learn to read and keep on reading. Libraries help families start early to interest children in books and make words and reading fun. A friendly librarian, wonderful books, and fun with other children help immensely.

The monograph cited is:

Celano, Donna and Neuman, Susan. *The Role of Public Libraries in Children's Literacy Development, An Evaluation Report*. University of Michigan; Pennsylvania Library Association. February 2001. This monograph is also available at <http://www.statelibrary.state.pa.us/libraries/lib/libraries/Role of Libraries.pdf>. or <http://www.palibraries.org/publications.htm>.

The article cited is:

Birckmayer, Jennifer. "The role of Public Libraries in Emergent and Family Literacy." *Zero to Three*. Volume 21, issue 3. December 2000/January 2001. Page 24. Text of the article is also available at <http://www.zerotothree.org/vol21-3s.pdf>. Links to the article and many other articles about early literacy support are at <http://www.zerotothree.org/sample.html>.

Activity Notes

Sample activities using the book *CLICKETY CLACK*, by Rob and Amy Spence

MATERIALS:

- Assorted miniature vehicles
- 2 cups
- Assorted rhyming pictures or objects
- 6 inch paper plate
- Brad
- 4 inch construction paper circle
- Assorted pictures of vehicles on index cards
- Assorted pictures of animals on index cards
- Assortment of construction paper shapes

ACTIVITIES After Reading the Book:

1) Direct child in place word activity with 2 cups and a miniature train

Example: Put the train *on* the cup; also practice *in*, *under*, *in front*, *in back*, and *between*

2) Rhyming word pictures or objects:

- Pass out one set to children and call out word or hold up picture
- Child with rhyming picture or object stands

3) Sounding out words:

- Attach construction paper circle to back of plate with brad
- Write "ack" on front of plate to right of brad
- Cut hole in paper plate to left of brad
- Write "cl", "b", "s", "r", "p", "st", "bl" on circle so that one letter or blend is visible as wheel is turned

- Help children sound out "ack" words (may add picture cues)
- May write "cl" to left of brad and cut hole to right. Write word base on circle: "ick", "ip", "ack", "ap", etc.

4) Matching and sorting:

- Cut individual train cars out of one border
- Child places individual cars on matching cars
- Child sorts picture cards into sets of vehicles or animals
- Increase difficulty by sorting flying vehicles, water vehicles, farm animals, zoo animals, etc.

5) CRAFT ACTIVITY:

Child uses construction paper shapes to make a train

Example: Rectangle engine, square window, round wheels, etc.

OPTIONAL BOOKS:

- Read *Freight Train* and *See the Yak Yak*

KEEPING IT SIMPLE FOR TODDLERS & TWOS

- ✓ Process is more important than the product. *DOING* is more important than what is made.
- ✓ A 3-5 minute group time is an appropriate expectation, but may still be too long for some.
- ✓ The younger the child, the greater the need for physical activity. For twos and younger, *at least 1/3 of the day* should be spent in gross motor activities.
- ✓ A balance of active and quiet play is needed. 20-30 minutes of physical activity allows a child to release excess energy before a quiet activity begins.
- ✓ Certain activities need to be repeated on a daily basis to provide a sense of time and sequence.
- ✓ Learning is enhanced when adults observe and then verbalize children's actions.
- ✓ Activities should be short, simple, and require little preparation and clean-up time.
- ✓ Activities should provide children with opportunities to play independently and with other children.
- ✓ Books and story time are essential, but need not be group time.

Sample activities using the book *MOUSE PAINT*, by Ellen Stoll Walsh

MATERIALS:

- 2 cups
- Assortment of blocks – 3 or 4 per person
- Plastic bears and mice (assorted colors and sizes)
- Clock
- Stuffed mouse
- Paint palette
- Sheet of white paper
- Blue, yellow, red paint
- 6 Q-tips

ACTIVITIES After Reading the Book:

- 1) **Direct child in preposition/place word activity with 2 cups and a toy mouse**

Example: Put the mouse *on* the cup; also practice *in*, *under*, *in front*, *in back*, *between*, and *middle*

- 2) **Allow child to explore wooden blocks and plastic bears and mice without giving specific instructions**

- 3) **Visual matching:**

- Place 1 block on table; have child match
- Place 2 blocks of different colors have child match; if successful, do 3 blocks

- 4) **Auditory matching:**

- Name 1 color; have child place that color block on table
- Name 2 colors; have child place those blocks; if successful, name 3 colors

5) Recite Hickory Dickory Dock - children act out rhyme

- Repeat/changing prepositions:
"the mouse ran *under* the clock" or "the mouse ran *over* the clock", etc.
- Have children act out each variation of rhyme

6) CRAFT ACTIVITY:

- Adult squirts paints onto palette
- Retells story as demonstrates mixing color combinations on paper using Q-tips
- Encourages child to mix colors and make own "mouse prints"

OPTIONAL BOOKS: *Mouse Mess* and *Mouse Count*

Reproducible Information

Ten good reasons to read to babies

1. Baby associates your voice with warmth, comfort, and security.
2. Reading has a calming effect on a restless baby.
3. Baby is entertained by nursery rhymes and songs.
4. Holding the baby while reading to him/her creates a close, loving bond between parent and baby.
5. Baby makes an association between reading and being held.
6. The pleasure of being held transfers to the desire to be read to.
7. Baby will learn to listen and will grow up ready to read.
8. Baby will begin imitating sounds and words.
9. Baby must hear English (or French or whatever) in order to learn that language.
10. It's fun to read to a baby!

Selecting books for infants

- ✓ Pictures should be large, bold colorful, and uncluttered.
- ✓ Illustrations should show definite contrast between light and dark.
- ✓ Stories should be short.
- ✓ Books with longer stories should be read to baby as his or her attention span increases.
- ✓ Wordless books are useful to parents to make up stories as they “read” the pictures.

Types of books for infants:

- Board books - pages are heavy, sturdy, and laminated; perfect for little hands. The pictures are simple and clear; the books are brightly designed; the stories are simple and short. Babies can chew on sturdy books without causing too much damage. Clean books by wiping with 1/2 cup bleach per gallon of water, window cleaner, or rubbing alcohol.
- Cloth books -- pages are made of heavy-duty cloth. Pages aren't as easily turned as those in board books, but the books are durable -- just toss and wash.
- Soft plastic books -- these are durable and can even go in the bathtub.

Books to share with infants include:

- Books with rhyme, rhythm, and repetition
- Books with pictures of other babies
- Informational books
- Books with textures or touch and feel books
- Concept books
- Folktales
- Books that feature familiar items or events in baby's world
- Books that feature sounds
- Books babies can manipulate, such as lift the flap books or books with holes (12 - 18 months)
- Books of different sizes and shapes (18-30 months)
- Books with “parent appeal”

Choosing Children's Books for Different Ages and Stages

Infants to Toddlers



Look for books that are full of simple, colorful pictures. Children will first want to look at pictures with faces and round objects. Board books with thick pages are made so they fan out, which makes it easier for a baby to grab and turn the pages. Babies will play with books in many ways. Fan a book out in front of a baby on her stomach and encourage her to crawl towards it.

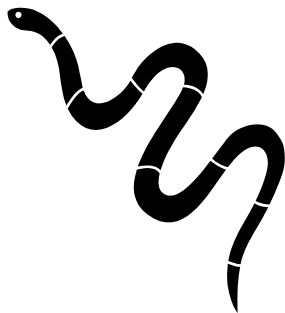
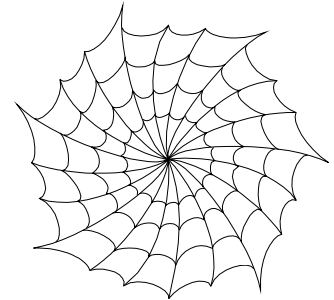
During these early years children learn to name things and to hear rhythms and rhymes. As naming occurs, look for books with more complex pictures that are realistic and show familiar toys and common objects. Books of old, favorite nursery rhymes are fun to read and the rhythms and rhymes greatly increase language skills.

As infants become toddlers, their interests widen, although they still are the center of their world. Books about their favorite subject, such as trains, dinosaurs, or horses, hold their attention after many readings. This repetition helps them grow in their language and means they can listen to longer and longer stories.

Choosing Children's Books for Different Ages and Stages

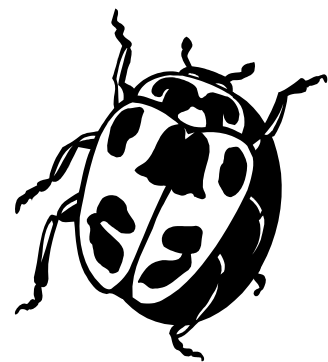
Preschoolers

Stories that are more complex and about unfamiliar things will capture a preschooler's attention. Books that are part of a series build a child's knowledge about books and authors. Chapter books appeal to children because they are more "grown-up." Let children take part in choosing books and help them find books that follow their interests. Non-fiction books about spiders, worms, and insects, for example, may help develop a budding scientist.



Books that play with numbers help develop the concepts of sequencing and sets. Books exploring cause and effect, spatial relationships and pattern completion hold a child's attention with discovery of layers of meaning on repeated readings. Look for books with lots of visual interest; seek and find or seek and match books for this age increase a child's ability to pay attention to detail.

At the same time, books full of fantasy also delight this age child. Their language is fairly comprehensive and discussing detailed drawings will continue to enlarge children's vocabulary. Repeated readings may encourage a child to point to known words and say them aloud. This is also the time when a child will begin to "read" traffic signs and store signs. Look for books that highlight words that are often seen such as "stop" and "exit."



Things that help children read well

- ✓ Their language skills are good for their ages. This includes how well they understand the sounds of language and how the sounds go together.
- ✓ They have heard lots of words and have good vocabularies for their ages.
- ✓ They already know some things about reading when they enter school.
- ✓ They have happy and important experiences associated with reading and writing. They have reasons to like reading and books.
- ✓ They have enough knowledge about the world to help them understand what they read.
- ✓ Their lives are secure enough that their worries do not block their ability to learn. Their lives are calm and happy enough that they have the energy for learning to read and write and for paying attention.
- ✓ These same things help children work hard while they are learning to read. They help children practice reading until they get good at it.

Three things parents can do to help children succeed in school

- ✓ Talk to children about many different things.
- ✓ Read to them while you hold them and love them.
- ✓ Talk to the children about what you read together.

Facts about most children who are good readers for their ages

- ✓ They are read to often and in happy ways.
- ✓ Conversation, books, and written things are part of their daily lives.
- ✓ They do NOT watch too much TV.
- ✓ They see the grownups in their lives reading and writing.
- ✓ They know enough about the world to make sense out of what they read.
- ✓ They know enough about books to understand what they see in books.
- ✓ Their lives are safe enough that they can pay attention and learn.
- ✓ They know that ideas and stories and pictures in books can be interesting.
- ✓ They think and talk about what the words say. They wonder about the stories and ask questions. They react to what they read or what somebody reads to them. They try to figure out what will happen next. They can relate the story in the book to other things.

Parent tips: Make reading to your child fun

- Choose a good time – don't fight the experience from the start. Bedtime works well in many families, but other times also work.
- If the child is just too hyped up at the moment, let it be and come back to it. Forcing the issue won't build a love of reading,
- One reason to read to infants is that they learn how to behave during reading time before they can protest. For older children who won't sit still you may have to start with very brief sessions and work up to longer reading time. Bedtime often works since kids can put off sleeping by listening to a story. It is worth the trouble to ease them into it. It also helps them get ready to sit and pay attention at school.
- Use voices and intonation and even gestures to draw the child in.
- Repeat favorites but introduce variety.
- Talk about the pictures.
- Talk about the books after you read them. What might happen next? Would you do the same thing? Why was this a problem? Why was that a good idea?
- Make favorite stories part of your conversation at other times. "This reminds me of when Peter didn't want his baby sister to have his chair." "Let's try making a snow angel like the kids in that book."
- Imagine new stories to go with the pictures if it's a book without words. Or cover the words and try another story line.
- Find books about what the child is interested in. Books are for more than one purpose, and of course you will introduce your child to classics and learning books, but to get the child interested in books, put up with cartoon characters or every book in the library about trucks.
- Read very simple books with the same enthusiasm you use for real stories; this dignifies them and helps kids accept them in preparation for the time when they will be reading them.
- Keep it pleasant and low pressure – no child (or adult) likes to do wearisome chores and we don't want reading to be a wearisome chore.
- Make reading together a good parent child time. Hold the children close and pay attention to them. Love them.
- Laugh at the silliness, play with the words and ideas, talk about the stories and the ideas they may inspire. Adults are excused for acting silly when they are reading to kids. Nonsense words, rhymes, word plays, and songs are important for the fun of it and because they build the sense of sounds that help children read later.

BOOK BEHAVIORS

INFANTS (Birth - 12 Months):

- Enjoy being held and snuggled and hearing the sound of your voice as you read or describe the pictures
- May chew, mouth, and manipulate books so need sturdy board, cloth, or vinyl books
- Appreciate the sounds of songs, nursery rhymes, and sound effects
- Enjoy large, bright, clear pictures
- Are attracted to pictures of animals and children

TODDLERS AND TWO YEAR OLDS:

- Are delighted by nursery rhymes even if they don't understand all the words
- Enjoy briefly sitting and looking at picture books with one object or idea on a page
- Enjoy pointing to things and/or naming what they see in a book
- Enjoy board books with stiff pages that they can turn
- Older "twos" appreciate "busy" pictures with many different things on a page

BOOK BEHAVIORS

THREE YEAR OLDS:

- Appreciate books with simple text where the story is reinforced by the pictures
- Enjoy repetition - of key lines and phrases, and of favorite stories
- Enjoy rhymes and nonsense words
- Enjoy stories about everyday life and animals
- Can attend to a story for approximately 5 minutes

FOUR YEAR OLDS:

- Begin to recognize environmental print: signs, labels, etc.
- Begin to understand that printed text is what is read, not the pictures
- Relate personal experience to stories and enjoy familiar characters
- Begin to "read" stories to self and others and retell familiar stories
- Can supply words and phrases in predictable and rhyming stories
- Attend to a story, listen well, and study pictures

FIVE YEAR OLDS:

- Can attend to longer, more complex stories
- Are aware of "book knowledge" - we start at the beginning, move left to right, etc.
- Enjoy books which supply information in an area of interest
- May begin to recognize individual letters and words
- May enjoy having their own stories written down

INVEST IN SCHOOL SUCCESS

Balance Sheet

DEPOSIT

Child is read to
under ½ hour per week

Child is read to
½ hour per week

Child is read to
½ hour per day

Child watches 4 hours of
television per day
(*US average for preschoolers)

RETURN

*By kindergarten entry:

60 hours of literacy
instruction

130 hours of literacy
instruction

900 hours of literacy
instruction

4000 hours of
television viewing

YOUR INVESTMENT NOW PAYS DIVIDENDS *LATER*.

YOUR CHILDREN ARE BANKING ON YOU.

KEY SKILLS FOR THE PRESCHOOL AGE CHILD

Basic Skills Important For School Success

LISTENING SKILLS:

- **DISCRIMINATION:** Ability to hear likenesses and differences between similar sounds
- **MEMORY:** Ability to listen and remember what was heard
- **FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS:** Ability to listen to, understand, and act upon an oral command

VISUAL SKILLS

- **DISCRIMINATION:** Ability to see likenesses and differences between similar objects
- **MEMORY:** Ability to see and remember what was seen

LANGUAGE CONCEPTS

- **CLASSIFYING AND CATEGORIZING:** Identifying groups of objects and how they are related
- **COMPARISONS:** Identifying how objects are alike or different
- **SEQUENCING:** Identifying the order in which events occur

NUMBER CONCEPTS

- **ROTE COUNTING:** Ability to count by memory
- **COUNTING WITH MEANING:** Understanding quantities
- **1:1 CORRESPONDENCE:** Understanding that one number stands for one object
- **COMPARING QUANTITIES:** Understanding that one group has more or fewer objects than another group

MOTOR SKILLS

- **GROSS MOTOR:** Use of large muscles to jump, hop, balance, catch, and throw
- **FINE MOTOR:** Use of small muscles to cut, draw, and copy shapes and letters

PRE-WRITING SKILLS

- 1) Must have the ability to grasp and release an object voluntarily, but do not have to have a mature grasp. (Will first use a full-fisted grip with a crayon or pencil).
- 2) Must move from the "destructive" play stage (when mouths, throws, shakes, or bangs toys in order to learn about them) to "constructive" play (when begins stacking blocks, putting objects together, etc.).
- 3) Must have practice in eye-hand coordination tasks: stacking blocks, playing with shape sorters, etc.
- 4) Must be involved in a variety of sensory/motor experiences:
 - Manipulative toys and puzzles
 - Sand and water play
 - Exploring objects with different textures and shapes
 - Experience with an assortment of markers, chalk, crayons, pens, pencils, paints
 - Writing in finger paints, lotions, pudding, oatmeal, or whipped cream

Children who begin to write letters, numbers, and words have spent years learning the pre-writing skills that prepare them for writing. The age that they go through each stage varies from child to child, but it is the adult's responsibility to provide appropriate experiences for each developmental stage.

Ideas for Literacy Activities*

Birth to Age 1

Play with sounds. Imitate your baby's cooing and babbling. Try to get a "conversation" going by making the sound and then giving your baby a chance to make the sound back. (Be patient. It takes at least eight seconds for a baby to hear a sound and figure out how to imitate it).

Ages 1 to 4

Make up a song using your child's name.
For example:

"Jacob, Jacob
Turn around.
Jacob, Jacob
Touch the ground
Jacob, Jacob
Clap your hands.
Jacob, Jacob
Do your dance."

Teach your child to move to the rhythm, acting out the words of the song.

Age 2 and Up

Make up stories together. Tell a story about when you were little. Then ask him to tell you a story about when he was little.

Age 3 and Up

Ask her to "read" to you.
This is especially interesting if you have a new book with detailed pictures. You can talk about the first picture. Then ask her to tell you about the next. Prompt her with open-ended questions, such as "What do you think that dog is about to do?"

Age 4 and Up

Keep a reading list. Have your child say something about each book. "It's about a silly monkey." Or "I really liked this book; it's about all kinds of trains." Revisit the reading list and talk about the books you've read.

Age 6 and Up

Help your child start a journal. Take a few minutes each day to write down the important events of the day. Let her spell on her own or help her if she asks.

Age 8 and Up

Develop a parent/child reading club. Ask your librarian or teacher for "fun" reads you and your child can both enjoy.

* Thanks to Sarah Beaman-Jones, LIFT's Literacy Program Developer, for these activities

Helping your children read

- ❑ Talk about many things with your children, even when they are babies. Make conversation a happy time. Use words to talk about what has happened, solve problems, imagine things, tell stories, ask questions, make plans, describe things, and talk on the phone. This builds good language skills for later reading and learning.
- ❑ Give your children a variety of healthy experiences. This builds a base of knowledge so they can understand things they read in books later.
- ❑ Read to your child. Read often and regularly. Enjoy it. This is the single best thing parents can do to help their children read successfully and do well in school.
- ❑ Surround your child with as many reading materials as you can. Regular trips to the library can help you do this. Let children see you read and write as part of your life; this establishes its importance and pleasure.
- ❑ Have a regular family reading time; read aloud to younger children; everyone (including parents) reads silently at the same time for older kids.
- ❑ Keep on reading aloud even when children have begun to read to themselves. Then let them read to you and the rest of the family. Have them read you recipes, poems, mail, ads, and jokes. Remember books on tape for trips or busy times.
- ❑ Talk with your child about the characters and events in stories. Repeat rhymes and sounds. Discuss the pictures. Discuss the story. React. Predict what will happen.
- ❑ Poems, rhymes, songs, word games, word puzzles, and even nonsense words help children learn the letter and sound patterns that help them learn to read.
- ❑ Books help you teach your child about your family's culture, values, interests, and even challenges. There are now children and teens' books about all kinds of people, families, times, and experiences as well as beautiful picture books for all ages that convey many situations and cultures. Try the library for variety. Reading together builds family relationships while it builds success with reading.
- ❑ Let reading be part of nurturing and respecting your child's interests. The library can provide books, magazines, even Web sites on almost anything your child enjoys. Sometimes children will get stuck on one kind of book, but time spent simply reading builds skill for reading. Most children will move on to wider interests later.
- ❑ Libraries and other child-friendly organizations often have programs such as story hours, book clubs, read-ins, or summer reading events that encourage reading.
- ❑ Read for information, for pleasure, for entertainment, for help, for education, to pass the time – but read and keep on reading!

Reading Tips for Families

The *America Reads Challenge: Ready*Set*Read for Families* has these tips for families as their children's first teacher:

- Read with your children at a regular time every day and when they ask you.
- Take toddlers and preschoolers to the library so that they can choose books to read at home.
- Find out about your library's special books and services.
- Create a special place in your home for your children to read and write.
- Keep books and other reading materials where children can reach them. Add new books often.
- Keep writing materials such as washable, nontoxic crayons and markers, paints and brushes, and different kinds of paper where your children can reach them.
- Take books and writing materials for your children with you whenever you leave home, so that they can read or write at the doctor's office, on the bus, and in the car.
- Show your children how you read and write every day to have fun and to get things done.
- Point out to your children the printed words in your home and in the community.
- Encourage your children to do things for themselves when they are ready. Let them feed and dress themselves, and clean up after themselves, even if these tasks take more time and are not done perfectly.

(<http://www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads/RSRkit.html>)

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

"Play is the powerful way children learn their most important tasks – how to play with other children, how to handle other adults, and how to learn about themselves as social people."

T. Berry Brazelton, Pediatrician
Author of *Touchpoints*

- It is the "work" of young children
- It is the framework for social, language, intellectual, and physical development
- It is how children make sense of the world around them

"GOOD" PLAY:

- Provides *teachable moments*: a child learns best when he is doing something he enjoys
- Allows for *hands on activities*: touching, moving, experimenting rather than just watching or listening
- Provides chances for problem solving and practicing new skills and ideas
- Allows the child to use his imagination and be creative

WAYS TO PROMOTE "GOOD" PLAY:

- Provide *open-ended toys and materials* that encourage real play; items that children can explore as they see fit
- Provide play experiences that match a child's abilities

TIPS FOR READING TO CHILDREN

- The essence of the reading experience should be to build a warm bond between adult and child
- Read slowly and with expression
- Arrange a time for reading *every day*
- Expect a lot of questions, especially from very young children
- Remember that listening is a skill which develops gradually over time, and even very active children can learn to attend to and enjoy books
- Actively involve the child in the story--draw attention to details in the pictures, ask questions about what might happen next, etc.
- Repeat best loved stories often
- Include wordless books and encourage the child to help you tell the story
- Include nursery rhymes and poems. They help a child feel the rhythm of language, and learning poems helps them develop auditory memory
- Begin with books with large, clear pictures that directly support the text. Move toward more text and fewer pictures so that the child must visualize more of the action
- Enjoy the experience

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH INFANTS

(Birth - 12 Months)

- ◆ Has a developmental need to establish trust
- ◆ Needs immediate and consistent responses to communication attempts
- ◆ Extremely curious, actively explore environment
- ◆ Needs security base
- ◆ Responds to human faces
- ◆ Understands names of familiar people
- ◆ Reaches for and grasp objects
- ◆ Looks for dropped objects
- ◆ Explores objects by mouthing
- ◆ Repeats interesting actions
- ◆ Uses fingers to push buttons and to explore manipulatives
- ◆ Enjoys social games and interaction
- ◆ Babbles and squeals to self and others

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH TODDLERS (12-24 Months)

- ◆ Developmental need to establish independence
- ◆ Drive to be upright and mobile affects all areas
- ◆ Separations may be noisy and painful
- ◆ Clinginess increases
- ◆ Frustration, negativism, and tantrums emerging
- ◆ Have difficulty with transitions
- ◆ Do best with structure and continuity
- ◆ Walk, climb, stoop, and throw
- ◆ Jabber with speech intonation
- ◆ May understand 20 or more words and say 10 or more
- ◆ May begin to combine words
- ◆ Point to some body parts
- ◆ Recognize pictures of familiar people and objects
- ◆ Need opportunities to express appropriate power and control: choices, opportunities to say "no"

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH 2-YEAR-OLDS

- ◆ Recognize themselves as separate individuals
- ◆ Begin to identify preferences ("I like," or "I don't like")
- ◆ Are more assertive and articulate about their feelings; discover "no" and "mine" have power
- ◆ Interest in new social experiences, but may be overwhelmed by a large group setting
- ◆ Begin to anticipate consequences
- ◆ Do best with daily routine that is predictable and consistent
- ◆ Enjoy parallel play, aware of each other's presence but not really interacting
- ◆ Imaginary play is used to interpret new experiences
- ◆ Language becomes more conversational; vocabulary of 40-200 words
- ◆ Label pictures in books and describe what they see
- ◆ Repetition is important
- ◆ Enjoy the humor of language: nonsense words, mispronunciation
- ◆ Have a short and variable attention span
- ◆ Focus on manipulating materials

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH 3-YEAR-OLDS

- ◆ Enjoy praise; show pride in accomplishments
- ◆ Like to help adults with tasks or chores
- ◆ May return to younger behavior (being bossy, acting like a baby, using "no" often)
- ◆ Do best with a regular schedule or routine
- ◆ Tell full name and age
- ◆ Use 3-5 word sentences
- ◆ Follow a 2 or 3 step direction
- ◆ Can describe their own actions and what's happening in a picture
- ◆ Can listen to a story for up to 5 minutes
- ◆ Know their gender
- ◆ Understand such prepositions as under, inside, on, etc.
- ◆ Can sort by color and size and name 2 or more colors
- ◆ Count by rote to 10
- ◆ Understand taking turns
- ◆ Handle scissors; make small snips in paper
- ◆ Hold a pencil or crayon with fingers and thumb
- ◆ Draw a person with a head; arms/legs come out of head

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH 4-YEAR-OLDS

- ◆ Like to brag and show off
- ◆ Love excitement or anything new – books, games, etc.
- ◆ Like to please adults and separate from adults easily
- ◆ Ask and answer questions
- ◆ Follow 3 step directions
- ◆ Show extremes of emotion; may worry or feel anxious
- ◆ Are more socially interactive with other children; are learning to share
- ◆ Can give full name address, or phone number
- ◆ Use new words to see what effect they will have on others; may include "naughty" words for shock value
- ◆ Can make logical predictions
- ◆ Can tell how things are alike and different
- ◆ Identify qualities of objects (rough, smooth, etc.)
- ◆ Recognize common symbols and signs
- ◆ Classify objects according to use
- ◆ Name 4-8 colors and count 3-4 objects
- ◆ Can cut on a line and use thumb-forefinger pencil grip
- ◆ Can draw person with body and legs
- ◆ May copy simple figures and print some letters

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH 5-YEAR-OLDS

- ◆ Are eager to please
- ◆ Love to talk and often ask meanings of new words
- ◆ Sometimes are anxious - may bite nails or pout
- ◆ Are interested in "fair play" and rules
- ◆ Are protective toward younger siblings and/or pets
- ◆ May have special friend or friends
- ◆ Use strong imagination in pretend play
- ◆ Are competitive
- ◆ Tell address and telephone number
- ◆ Speak fluently and usually use correct grammar
- ◆ May memorize a favorite story and act it out
- ◆ Use more logical thinking and problem-solving
- ◆ Sort objects by size, color, and shape
- ◆ Recognize several numerals and letters
- ◆ Can count small quantities and match to a numeral
- ◆ Can understand concept of half versus whole
- ◆ Count to 20 and count out up to 7 objects
- ◆ Hold pencil with a thumb-forefinger grip and print first name



To Promote Early Literacy:

Be a model of literate behavior for your children: write notes, keep a calendar and daily planner, post lists of food and household needs and children's responsibilities, introduce new vocabulary words during routine conversation and book reading, and subscribe to a local newspaper and magazines the entire family will enjoy.

Sing songs, make up silly rhymes, read books, and play with words and sounds every day. Discuss printed text, words, and sounds as “objects” that can be thought about, manipulated, altered, and explored. Help children build and use their ever-growing vocabulary.

Provide children with the tools of literate behavior (pens, pencils, markers, paper, envelopes, a stapler, paperclips, stamps, a dictionary, an atlas, telephone books, magazines, catalogues, newspapers, junk mail) and engage in daily literacy activities with your children (write thank you notes, mail birthday cards, look up phone numbers, find exotic destinations in an atlas, write lists, read books, visit the library).

Notes from the *Missouri Families* e-letter
For further information on Children's Early Literacy, see
<http://missourifamilies.org/features/childcarearticles/childcare3.htm>.

What are children learning when we read to them?

What are we teaching children when we hold them close and read to them, when we make reading and writing a pleasant part of everyday life?

- We are teaching them that they are important to us and we care about them. Researchers now believe reading and learning, like so many other things, are deeply related to relationships.
- When we hold children close and read to them, they are learning to sit still and watch a book. This is a skill best developed early.
- When children sit with us and watch the book we are reading to them, they learn that books open a certain way, that the English code runs from left to right (help them out by tracing the line with your finger as you read), front to back, page to page, one word after another.
- They realize the story is in the letter marks, that marks mean words and they mean the same words each time. They learn all books aren't the same, but they use the same code and system.
- Good readers have heard a lot of words. When we read to children they encounter and understand vocabulary they don't usually hear or meet. They get accustomed to differences in written and spoken language and variations in language.
- They make sense of story and narration. Through words, they enter into something they haven't experienced personally.
- They gain background knowledge vital to reading comprehension as they learn about both books and the world.
- When we hold children close and read to them, they get interested in what is in books and realize books are a source of pleasure.
- They get good feelings about reading; this helps them persevere during the learning process and motivates them to learn to read.
- They realize reading is important to the adults they care about and learn to value it; a value and motivation that helps them in school.
- When the adult reading the book talks about the book, it expands the child's language and interest.
- When the adults reading the books talk with the children about the book and the pictures, the children learn how to use context, which is a skill the child needs to make sense of reading later on.
- They learn that books relate to their lives. Well-chosen books help teach children the values and associations their families hold dear.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BOOKS AND READING

A child who is read to on a regular basis is more likely to become a "reader" – a person who not only can read, but one who enjoys reading.

Being read to is the single best indicator of later school success.

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE CAN:

- Enrich vocabulary
- Enhance comprehension and knowledge
- Support a child through challenging events in life
- Provide a model for articulation of specific sounds
- Help increase attention span and thinking skills

BUILDING BLOCKS OF LITERACY

- Talking, singing, playing, and listening
- Reading aloud daily
- Modeling reading
- Providing a variety of life experiences

SUGGESTED BOOKS FOR INFANTS, TODDLERS, AND 2-YEAR-OLDS

BOOK :

All Fall Down

Clap Hands

Tickle, Tickle

Amy Loves the Rain

The Baby's Book of Babies

Baby's Animal Friends

Farm Animals

Blue Hat, Green Hat

Moo Baa, La La La

Bunny and Me

Cars and Trucks and Things That Go

Come Out, Jessie

Goodnight Moon

I Went Walking

Outside, Inside

Pat the Bunny

Time for Bed

Tom and Pippo (series)

We're Going on a Bear Hunt

Wheels on the Bus

Where's Nicky?

Where's Spot? (series)

Who Says Quack?

AUTHOR :

Helen Oxenbury

Lillian Hoban

Antea Sieveheng

Random House

Sandra Boynton

Adele Aron Greenspan and
Joanie Schwarz

Richard Scarry

Harriett Ziefert and
Mavis Smith

Margaret Wise Brown

Sue Williams

Kathleen Fain

Dorot Kunhardt

Mem Fox

Helen Oxenbury

Michael Kosen and
Helen Oxenbury

Paul O. Zelinsky

Cathryn Fallwell

Eric Hill

(A pudgy book)

SUGGESTED BOOKS FOR 3-YEAR-OLDS

BOOK:

Big Red Barn

*Brown Bear, Brown Bear,
What Do You See?*

Clickety Clack

Come Along Daisy

Dear Zoo

Dinosaur Roar

Dogs Don't Wear Sneakers

Freight Train

Good Night, Gorilla

Have You Seen My Cat?

Head To Toe

The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Jamerry

Jump, Frog, Jump

The Lady With The Alligator Purse

The Little Mouse

The Red Ripe Strawberry

The Big Hungry Bear

Mouse Mess

Mouse Paint

AUTHOR:

Margaret Wise

Bill Martin/Eric Carle

Rob and Amy Spence

Jane Simmons

Rod Campbell

Paul & Henrietta
Strickland

Laura Numeroff

Donald Crews

Peggy Rathmann

Eric Carle

Bruce Degen

Peggy Rathmann

Nadine Bernard Westcott

Don & Audrey Wood

Linnea Riley

Ellen Stoll Walsh

SUGGESTED BOOKS FOR 4-YEAR-OLDS

BOOK:

Counting Crocodiles

Each Peach Pear Plum

Greedy Python

Grouchy Ladybug

The Grumpy Morning

Hop, Jump

I Love You With All My Heart

If You Give a Mouse a Cookie
(& other books by this author)

Is Your Mama a Llama?

Leo the Late Bloomer

Miss Spider's Tea Party

My Big Dog

Mouse Count

Over in the Meadow

The Snowy Day

Suddenly

To Market, To Market

Warthogs in the Kitchen

When the Fly Flew In

Where the Wild Things Are

The Wolf's Chicken Stew

AUTHOR:

Judy Sierra

Janet & Allan Ahlberg

Richard Buckley/Eric Carle

Eric Carle

Pamela Duncan Edwards

Ellen Stoll Walsh

Noris Kern

Laura Numeroff

Steven Kellogg

Robert Kraus

David Kirk

Janet Stevens and
Susan Stevens Crummel

Ellen Stoll Walsh

Paul Galdone

Ezra Jack Keats

Colin McNaughton

Anne Miranda

Pamela Duncan Edwards

Lisa Westberg Peters

Maurice Sendak

Keiko Kasza

SUGGESTED BOOKS FOR 5-YEAR-OLDS

BOOK:

Animals Born Alive and Well

Gingerbread Baby

Hedgie's Surprise

Hey, Little Ant

How Animals Hide

The Kissing Hand

Left or Right

Noah's Ark

Red Lace, Yellow Lace

Stellaluna

Sylvester and the Magic Pebble

Verdi

We Are Wolves

When Bluebell Sang

When Dad Cuts Down the Chestnut Tree

AUTHOR:

Ruth Heller

Jan Brett

Phillip and Hannah Hoose

Books for Young Explorers
Nat'l Geographic Society

Audrey Penn

Karl Rehm and Kay Koike

Peter Spier

Mike Casey

Janell Cannon

William Steig

Janell Cannon

Melinda Julietta and
Lucia Guarnotta

Lisa Campbell Ernst

Pam Ayres

Developmental Benchmarks

Skills children typically have at a given age

At three months, your child should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn head toward bright lights • Respond to loud sounds • Grasp objects placed in hand • Recognize breast or bottle • Begin to bat at objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make cooing, babbling sounds • Lift head and chest when lying on tummy • Quiet when spoken to • Follow moving objects with eyes • Smile
At six months, your child should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach for toys and pick them up • Move toys from hand to hand • Help hold bottle • Sit with minimum support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to crawl • Roll over both ways • Turn toward source of normal sound • Recognize familiar faces
At nine months, your child should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit without support • Find toy hidden under cloth • Imitate “bye-bye”, “mama”, clap, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin creeping on hands and knees • Enjoy dumping out and picking up things
At one year, your child should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pull himself/herself to a standing position • Crawl on hands and knees • Wave “bye-bye” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put toys into container • Begin to use a spoon and hold a cup • When asked, point to object he/she knows
At 18 months, your child should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try putting on their own shoes • Feed themselves with a spoon • Like to help • Let you know what they want 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point to things when needed • Walk without help • Pick up a Cheerios® • Build a tower with three blocks
At two years, your child should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to short stories • Turn the pages of a book • Copy another child’s play • Jump 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run • Walk up and down stairs with help • Sometimes use two-word sentences • Often do the opposite of what is asked
At three years, your child should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk well enough to be mostly understood • Use three-word sentences • Tell you who is a girl and who is a boy • Pedal a tricycle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kick a ball • Initiate (copy) drawing a straight line • String large objects • Name six body parts
At four years, your child should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions • Play make-believe • Take turns • Dress himself/herself, except for fasteners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put together a 7 to 12 piece puzzle • Draw a face • Balance on one foot • Name several colors
At five years, your child should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play organized games • Follow three-step directions • Cut with scissors • Copy familiar shapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw a person with 6 to 8 body parts • Catch a bounced ball • Count to ten • Understand the meaning of many words

Section Three
Supporting Reading
Instruction: Serving Early
Elementary School
Students

Literacy notes for libraries serving children during their early elementary school years

When children enter school and formal reading instruction begins, supporting them as they learn to read offers a great opportunity for libraries that support literacy.

Ultimately the components of reading must work as a whole process resulting in the reader making meaning from the language the text represents. The process is complex (although some children grasp it so quickly it hardly seems so). Educators still argue about exactly how reading skill develops and whether it works the same for all children. People who study or teach the process often focus in turn on one or another aspect of the process in an effort to understand the complexities and make the process manageable. A brief overview of some of the terms and concepts they use may be helpful.

First, readers must be able to get from the print to the language it represents. Often this is called the decoding process. In most school systems, first grade focuses on the decoding process. We don't have all the answers yet on why this process is so easy for some children and why the whole reading process breaks down here for others, but active study of the problem continues. In English (and many other languages) there is a correlation between the sounds of the language and the letter symbols. Phonics is the specific teaching of the relationship between the sounds and letters. But the decoding part of reading involves more than knowing the correlation. It depends on the ability to match the letters to the right sounds, to then combine the individual sounds into syllables and words quickly enough to recognize not only the words represented by the letters but the flow of all the words. If figuring out what words the letters represent is a slow laborious process, meaning gets lost in the effort.

Teachers also talk about word analysis, which is sometimes defined as phonics and otherwise as being able to recognize plurals, regular past tenses, etc. of known words.

Decoding also involves some isolated word recognition. Sight words are the small common words that often don't follow the patterns of phonics very well. They must simply be practiced until they can be instantly recognized in any context. They also include some environmental print; that is, words on signs and labels that surround us but sometimes don't give us much context to help us figure out what the words are.

Materials for beginning readers assume children are familiar with the words in the book, but don't know what those words look like in print. Children who don't know the words at all are faced with the double task of learning the vocabulary while learning the print connection, and the print connection doesn't make much sense if they don't know the words anyway. So children who enter school without good vocabularies or without adequate language development start out behind; statistics report that many of them never catch up.

After readers know what words the print represents, they must understand the message, often on more than one level, and construct some sort of meaning from the words and phrases of the text. Teachers usually call this part of the process comprehension. They talk about different types or

levels of comprehension ranging from the basic task of understanding what the author said, to analyzing and evaluating and making personal connections. The point in all reading is, of course, meaning. For many new readers, especially those with well-developed language and familiarity with books and stories, getting meaning seems automatic once they know what the words are. For others, understanding and constructing meaning from written text is a struggle. Still others have adequate literal comprehension; that is, they can tell what the author's message is if the text is straightforward, but somehow they do not catch subtleties like sarcasm, and they cannot (or do not) evaluate or infer or see contradictions or make any personal meaning from the message of the text.

Study, argument, and interest in the reading process continue. Despite the claims of some groups, all the answers are not in. Many children, over half of them in most places, learn to read no matter how they are taught. But we know enough to see how libraries can support the literacy process and make a difference in the literacy levels children attain. Almost everyone agrees that exposing children to print early, often, and in happy ways helps the process along and may even be essential. So libraries are already helping developing readers before they enter school. Libraries can continue to support learners in the early stage of formal reading instruction through both the print collection and programming.

The Collection

Reading historian and researcher Nila Banton Smith observed that the evolving story of reading instruction has been to fill the gap between single words and great literature with texts to support the developing reader. This observation stakes out a territory for libraries. The library collection can be of enormous help to beginning readers who simply need to practice reading enough to get good at it.

The array of early reading books from which to choose is growing constantly. Typically, books useful for children in the early stages of reading acquisition depend on some combination of three features to keep young readers from being overwhelmed and help them learn the whole reading process in manageable increments. They are illustration, decidability, and predictability.

The first feature of books for new readers is usually bright and interesting pictures. The pictures serve as context to help children get meaning and to clarify the meaning of scant text. Pictures also serve to make the books attractive and interesting and encourage children to actually practice reading. Pictures also send other messages. Books picturing a variety of people of all ethnic, social, and cultural backgrounds are also important to send the message that literacy is valuable for everyone and can be part of everybody's world.

A second way authors write for beginning readers is to choose the words they use for their "decodability;" that is, they use words based on how "easy" the words are. Writers may control their vocabularies, limiting themselves to words beginning readers are likely to know or find easy to decode. This can backfire if the author limits the permissible words so tightly that he or she can't tell the story coherently; a vocabulary that is too restricted can make the reading task harder. Many authors use a combination of text and picture to tell a story with few words.

A third technique authors use to help beginning readers read their books successfully is predictability. Writers use features such as rhyme, pattern, repetition, illustrations, and predictability of the storyline to help young readers understand the story being told without overwhelming them while they build children's facility for written language. Librarians can look for these features as they make decisions about the collection.

Researchers agree practice counts, and simply reading what they can read makes children better readers. If libraries can give new readers access to a multitude of attractive, motivating books, that service increases the chance new readers will progress and become skillful independent readers.

Reading teachers call the words we see around us in signs and labels and other places environmental print. Librarians can label objects in your children's area or adding cues like pictures to signs at the library to help young readers understand what words mean and get used to the idea that signs around them tell them things. (In the process we train them as library patrons since we make much use of signage in our buildings.)

Libraries are also helping children manage print by adding software to help children practice reading components to their software collections. Some libraries add word games and activity books to the collection. While word activities are not reading in the fullest meaning sense, they do help some children get enough practice "breaking the code" that they can move on to fuller reading experiences.

Yet another way the library can use the collection to support developing readers is to add materials to the adult collection that help parents understand how to support the reading process and what to do if their children have reading problems. Research and experience continue to indicate parents provide experiences that are the basis for reading achievement. Providing parents with information about that role is an important literacy service.

Programming

Library programming can also be crafted to include literacy support.

Continue story times and continue reading aloud to children who are learning to read on their own. This bridges the gap between what they can understand and what they can read for themselves. It keeps them interested in reading and books. It helps them look forward to what they will be able to do when they get better at reading. It continues to help them grow in vocabulary and language and background knowledge, which are all important components of the reading process. It helps them figure out what books they want to read when they get better at it.

When a librarian reads to young children he or she can help by running a finger under the lines of print to help the children follow the words. Some books also have repeated words or phrases that can be copied onto a poster so that the group can read aloud together each time they appear.

Nothing is wrong with crafts or videos after a storytime reading, but there are other activities that can help literacy skills directly. Any activity that helps develop language, vocabulary, or word

recognition helps children be better readers. Anything that encourages children to re-read or retell, or write or discuss in response to a book or an experience, is a literacy activity.

Rereading familiar text helps children become better readers in these early stages. If the story time book is one that children may be able to handle after hearing it, try reading it again with group involvement. Even if the full text is beyond beginning readers, there might be repeated phrases that could be lettered on a sign, and children could read them chorally each time they occur. If the story has dialog, the librarian might read the narrative and assign small groups to read the parts of different characters. (If a group is reading chorally the more confident and able readers pull the others along and spare individuals any embarrassment.) Poetry lends itself to choral reading and group dramatic readings; try a poem related to the book just read.

Programs for these early readers can include brief game-like practice with sounds and letters in a context. There are examples of these in this handbook.

Librarians can help new readers improve all-important reading comprehension through activities like retelling, acting out, discussing, and imagining new endings or details. Props that may help are puppets, flannel boards with cutouts, dry erase boards and pens. Pieces of costumes or props related to the theme or events of a story may help acting out or retelling. Sheets of poster board put together with notebook rings like a giant book, along with markers or other writing supplies can also be used to make a new big book to follow up on the original story. Members of a slightly older group might create a brief monologue explaining to the audience how a character in the book felt. They might use puppets to present the thoughts, or a pretend newscaster could do interviews. Any activity that focuses on what the story said and how the listeners/readers reacted helps comprehension.

Creative writing is a valuable activity to increase and encourage literacy. Libraries can encourage children to write even while they are in the early stages of literacy. Although the time limits of a story hour preclude having children write extended narratives, even brief writing helps. Perhaps children could make greeting cards or signs with mottos from a book they have heard. Groups might write or tell a different version of the story. The library might provide a story starter or homemade blank book for children to take home and finish. Many poetry forms are available to inspire writing brief poems that can be copied onto fancy paper or decorated, and then posted on the bulletin board or taken proudly home. Summer programming when children can stay in the library longer might include a young authors' summer club or an afternoon of making books at the library. A few fortunate libraries may find a volunteer who comes often to write down what young authors dictate and helps them read it back and turn it into a finished form.

It is vital to continue to read aloud, tell stories, and do other pleasant things with books and children. Children can understand stories far beyond their reading level and benefit from seeing where they are going in the reading process. Hearing stories beyond their reading ability gives them a head start in comprehension and making meaning. Offering interesting and attractive texts helps children want to read. Giving them whatever success and encouragement we can keeps them reading what they can manage, and if they continue reading their reading skill keeps improving.

Summer reading is an especially valuable literacy tool after first and second grades because it helps children hold on to the instruction they have received, and practice the parts of the reading process they have learned. (Then after third and fourth grades, summer reading helps them become independent readers at their own levels and practice reading until it comes easily). The fun of summer reading is also important to children who may be finding learning to read very hard work.

Reading is difficult for some learners and some of them resist the effort. Often the children who resist reading are the ones having trouble with the process. (It should be noted that it might take more than effort for some children to become good readers.) While some researchers argue about the value of independent reading as an instructional strategy, once the reading process is in place most children enhance it by time spent reading. Unfortunately, the children who need the practice most may resist it most. For new readers and struggling readers, libraries can help by making reading worth the effort. Anything that engages a child in reading or exposes a child to pleasant reading activities contributes to reading skill.

Motivation is important to keep children reading until they get good at it. Libraries have traditionally been quite good at providing motivation through both programming and the attraction of a broad, appealing collection. The best motivation comes from inside people, so incentive programs are controversial, but many schools, libraries, and children's programs use them. We hope that extrinsic motivation will be temporary and children will discover that reading is meaningful and interesting and move on to inner motivation. We build intrinsic motivation by giving children good experiences with reading, something libraries have been doing for a long time now.

Libraries are perfectly placed to help children who are learning to read move on to full literacy.

Activity Notes

AN ALPHABET LETTER GAME

Supplies:

- 1 plastic jar (at least quart size) with lid
- 26 small wooden blocks; slips of construction paper can be used also.
- Label each block/slip of paper with a letter from the alphabet using only one letter per block/slip of paper. (Blocks are available at some education supply stores with letters already embossed on them.)
- Put some of the letter blocks or slips in the jar. It is not necessary to use all letters in any one session, but there should be only one of each letter.
- Index cards and tape or name badges to label objects in the room.

Instructions:

- Label items in the library or meeting room, using index cards or name badges and being sure there are several labels beginning with each letter that is in the jar.
- The first letter of each word can be bold print to help children recognize it.
- Let each child shake the jar and close his eyes while he selects a block/slip of paper.
- Then let the children search the classroom for labeled items that are spelled beginning with the letter they selected.
- Instruct the children to pull the labels off the items they find so they can turn in the number of items they found.
- When finished, let children share their letter and share the names of all the items they found. The librarian may have to help with the reading once the labels are detached from the objects, but the child can indicate the object in the room. This reinforces the idea that words stand for things.
- While children may not be able to read all the words, finding the items helps them understand what the word means, and how to spell the word as it is listed on the label.

Purposes:

- Recognizing letters, individually and in words
- Reinforcing that words stand for things
- Enhancing a child's ability to learn/identify new words and objects, understand their meaning, and ultimately read/spell new words.
- Supporting letter recognition, phonics, and vocabulary instruction.

Follow-up Activities:

Librarians can create word study lists or posters from all the labels for the items the children found. Examples: A= apple, B=book, C=computer, D=desk, and so on. Then in a later session pictures of the objects can be put next to the words on the list. Older children can re-label the objects.

For your game shelf



There are commercial word games and computer games for new readers. These can be added to your collection and loaded on your computers. While some educators argue that word drills are not reading in the important sense of making meaning, they will help some children “break the code” and learn to handle print well enough to make meaning in response to what they read.

If you keep regular table games in the library for children to use, you can modify other games into word games. Replace the cards in *Candyland* with cards that have the words for the colors or the chart in *Cootie* with one that says “leg” instead of the picture. Making such games can also become an activity for a children’s program or something older children can do for younger ones.



Flashcards and computer drills can work like games for children. Volunteers and older children can help younger ones.

If new and more experienced readers are playing a game together, the new readers are at a disadvantage with scoring. When you include these games in your library programming or help children play them independently, you can have “library scoring.” Alter the scoring in traditional word games such as *Scrabble* and go for the total group score or session score by adding up everyone’s words in the same column. You can also keep a log or poster where everyone who plays puts their own score and try to hit a certain cumulative group score by a certain date. You can also have children play as teams with new and more experienced readers together on the same team.

Using accordion folded strips of cardstock for make-it-yourself children's books

The preparation for these easy book blanks is simple. Use the long edge of a sheet of poster board, cover stock, or cardstock. Cut a strip and pleat it at even intervals. Turn the pleated strip so the back of the first 'page' forms the cover and the spaces between the folds form pages. Decide how wide the pages will be based in on the age of the child and the length of the sheet of material. For example, the 24" edge of a sheet of cover stock will give you eight 3" 'pages' when pleated at three-inch intervals or six 4" pages pleated at four-inch intervals. In general these will be small books, good for little hands, but you could cut and pleat a strip to give you a tall skinny book or tape sheets together to make a bigger book. The pleated strips may be turned vertically or horizontally. Horizontally they seem more like a book; vertically they open up almost like a narrow banner.

Accordion books lend themselves well to category or picture books that can be completed in a sitting. They are also good practice device for word lists for beginning readers. Some open-ended suggestions for topics are:

- ☞ Our families – Dad, Grandma, Keisha, Allan, etc.; each get a "page"
- ☞ Our pets or our friends – real or imaginary
- ☞ Colors - to practice reading color words
- ☞ Favorite things
- ☞ Holidays
- ☞ Any category of objects that can be described with a many
- ☞ Different words: short snowman, tall snowman, new snowman, old snowman, etc.; big fish, little fish, goldfish, green fish etc.; spotted dog, furry dog, smooth dog etc.; happy face, sad face, dirty face, mad face, girl face, guy face, nice face, my face – you get the picture
- ☞ word families, one picture per page – cat, bat, rat, mat, etc.; Jack, pack, black, tack, etc.; mall, ball, hall, wall, tall, small, etc.

A variation on this is to use stickers as the inspiration and illustrations. Three-inch strips folded at 3" intervals make a good size to hold a sticker and a few words. The stickers you supply suggest the subjects of the books. School supply and craft stores often have a huge variety to choose from. A series of pictures of a character might yield word books with entries like "Garfield... looking... reading... running... sleeping... eating." A series with farm animals might be used with simple labeling or the words to "old McDonald." Holiday series are easy: "At my house at Christmas I can see...presents...a star...some candles...a tree..."and so on. Mini stickers make good number books.

Many children's workers also enjoy helping children make spin-offs of favorite published books using repetitive or patterned text, either using stickers or letting children draw pictures. The adult may have to supply (perhaps even pre-print) the text but the child chooses and perhaps prints each new entry. Some books that lend themselves to this are *Brown Bear*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*.

Theme Letter Calendar For Story Hour

Supplies Needed:

- One large wall calendar or poster boards to draw a large calendar
- Set of colored markers
- Objects to be matched to letter sounds, different each week

Instructions:

- On the large calendar, outline or highlight the square for when that day's story hour is held.
- If days or the week are not labeled, label them and accent the day of the week on which story time occurs.
- Label each square for a story-hour day with one letter in very large print, or glue cut out letters to the calendar. Depending on the story hour schedule, you may choose to do a letter a week to get through the whole alphabet in a season, or you may choose to repeat letters to spread the letters across story hour sessions for the year. You may want to use only consonants, since consonants have more regular sound patterns than vowels, fewer words begin with vowels, and using only consonants might let you get through the alphabet twice in a season.
- Start each story hour by showing the calendar and introducing the theme letter for the day. Say the letter to the children, and pronounce the letter sound. Ask the children to repeat the name of the letter and make the sound also.
- Place items around the meeting room or library that begin with the letter targeted that week. Each week, ask children to find the items that go with the week's letter, say what the item is, and make the letter sound when pronouncing the word.
- A different letter will serve as the theme for each story time. This letter activity will provide an introductory activity to each story time through the year.
- While you will not want to limit story time to books and activities emphasizing the week's letter, sometimes the story or illustrations in the book correlate with the theme letter of the week and this may be emphasized when it happens.
- Activities following the story may also be about the theme letter when appropriate. Librarians may provide brief word list activities and spelling games using words in which the first letter begins with the theme letter. These may be take-home sheets or activities during the story hour.
- If you offer snacks, include foods spelled with the theme letter for the day.
- Send home activities sheets with the children, asking parents to have fun with their children by helping them find things that start with the theme letter.

Purposes

- The activity adds a brief but consistent literacy activity to regular story times.
- By focusing on one letter at a time, the activity helps children learn letters and letter sounds and identify items that have the letter sound.
- Children will become familiar with days of the week, and how a calendar works.
- This activity addresses phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary instruction.

Three word and sound games to help new readers

Game One:

Choose a letter/sound to focus on. Use a deck of picture cards or a picture book showing words containing the target sound anywhere in the word. Instead of using pictures, you can call out words. Have the child tell you where in the word – beginning, middle, or end - the target sound occurs. The beginning sound is easiest and most often practiced, but the other two positions are important in distinguishing between words, too.

Game Two:

Make up games with word families. Word families are groups of words spelled and sounding the same except for one letter. The “all” family would be all, ball, call, fall, hall, mall, stall, tall, wall. The “ate” family would be ate, Kate, fate, hate, late, mate, Nate, rate. Words like cab, cad, Cal, can, cap, and cat, that change only at the end might also be considered a word family. So might cap, cop, cup. Word families are a device for practicing sound-letter combinations and for building confidence. Word families are helpful for phonemic awareness, spelling, word games, and practice for beginning or struggling readers. (There is a method of teaching reading, sometimes called the “linguistic method,” based on such word families.)

Make a game out of seeing how many words in a word family the group can create (and laughing at the nonsense words that come along). Or let children take turns changing just one letter and calling out the new word. You will have to be prepared for some that break the rules and a few that we don’t say in polite company, but just acknowledging both usually solves the problem. Word families might be considered “short cut phonics” since the child only has to contend with changing one sound at a time. They also help a child grasp the way sounds go together and shift within the language.

Game Three:

One of the problems with phonics is that it is almost impossible to produce a sound in English and say it without adding a vowel. So when we tell a child a word begins with “puh” it really doesn’t, it begins with only the sound at the beginning of “puh.” The new reader has to catch on to this blending of only the beginning bit of the sound and the smoothing out and stringing together of other bits of sound. So make an oral game out of blending these bits of sound. Say “puh-eh-t” and have the child guess the word “pet.” Then let the child try out “duh-aw-g.” and you guess “dog.” A variation on this is “Whose name is it?” separating names of classmates or TV characters into their parts and having the children identify the real word.

This reinforces and demonstrates sounding out words and helps develop awareness of the sounds of the language. Start with one-syllable words; if the group seems to catch on move to more complicated words. At this point you are not writing or spelling the words, only dealing with the sounds. (English spelling does not help our literacy rate, but there is enough letter/sound correspondence to serve as a cuing system. Consonants are more regular than vowels.)

What libraries do for early elementary students in Missouri

A list of library literacy efforts, ideas, activities, and collaborations

Literacy efforts in Missouri's libraries are diverse, and they represent many kinds of service and literacy support. The ideas collected below come from libraries in Missouri, some are programs previously done, others are efforts in process, still others ideas are being developed. They are collected here as a catalogue of ideas that any other library in Missouri might borrow to increase library literacy efforts. The best ideas often come from the trenches!

- Tutoring school kids, either by individual volunteers or through formal homework helpers programs, is probably more common now than tutoring adults.
- A state representative visited, did a story time, and brought donated Scholastic books with him to give the attendees.
- Workshops like "Draw Your Own Comic Strip or Icky Science for Kids."
- Host a Read Across America event.
- A library purchases a book in honor of each kindergarten graduate, with special bookplates and a party; the honored child is the first to check out the book.
- Reading clubs/book groups after school (some with incentives through or support from local business).
- Spanish classes for kids (Other languages or topics work, too).
- Summer reading programs of various types, most often the Missouri State Library Program (Recreational reading builds literacy).
- A library allows daycares and summer camps sign kids up for summer reading, and works with daycare staff or camp counselors to help kids meet the goals.
- After-school programs come in on a regular schedule, or a library person goes to them with a reading-related activity on a regular schedule; sometimes this is done in collaboration with the school library.
- Winter reading programs (Use all those past summer reading manuals for ideas).
- Writing contest for kids or non-competitive young writers programs.
- Team reading events or contests that let struggling readers participate along with more fluent readers.

- Reading events or contests to be entered by a group of friends, or other groups, such as Brownie troops; this mixes struggling and fluent readers and makes the good readers peer group models while it lets slower readers get in on the fun.
- Acquiring materials that go with Accelerated Reader, Reading Recovery, etc., that are used in the local school; some headaches go with this, but it does get the kids who need to be reading to read and come to the library.
- Reading and other educational software available on computers.
- Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) programs; other reading encouragement or incentive programs.
- Home schooling programs and services.
- Activity alternatives to the television.
- Math materials/answers/games.

Reproducible Information

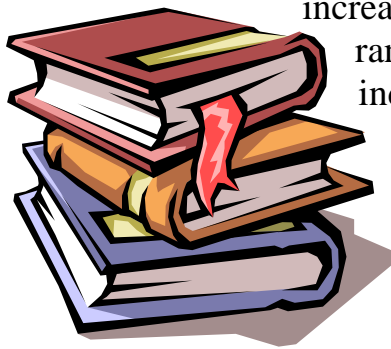
Choosing Children's Books for Different Ages and Stages

Early School Years



When children go to school, they want to learn about many different people and ideas. By now they may have memorized their favorite books and can recognize many different words. Because of the maturity of their brains, more complex behaviors occur. Socially, they enjoy playing with other children and can learn to work as a team. Because of this, their enjoyment of print can include many different activities, such as playing storekeeper or restaurant owner, post office, or scientist. Collections of books that support these activities enrich their experience.

During the early school years, children show tremendous growth in refined skills and memorization. For example, they can complete pencil mazes, begin creating their own stories, and remember up to five numbers in a row. Their attention span increases and they enjoy longer and longer stories on a wider range of subjects. This is the time when a child becomes an independent reader and it is important to keep reading aloud. Classic chapter books can be a pleasure for the entire family to read together. This age group likes joke books and silly stories. Easy how-to books with experiments or magic tricks may become inviting. Always remember to follow the child's interest.



Some tips for parents and other friendly adults: **Supporting Developing Readers**

Keep reading aloud; most children can comprehend at a higher level than they can read well into middle school. Reading aloud helps make reading fun, gives families reasons to talk about things that matter to them, share experiences, and learn together.

There is ample evidence children get to be better readers simply by reading. So do what you can to increase the time they spend reading and their reasons to read.

Help surround children with books, magazines, and print material about their interests. There are several magazines for the early-middle reading level. Some children who won't read fiction will read non-fiction about subjects they like. When children only want to read one kind of book, realize they are building the reading skill they need to branch out later. Introduce them to different kinds of literature on the topic they are "stuck" on.

Computers motivate some children to read. There are necessary cautions about Internet use, but there are also kid-safe Web sites and software. After children read what is on the screen, you can guide them to other print materials about what they learned via computer.

Let children see you reading and writing. If they see that you value reading, writing, and knowledge, it demonstrates that literacy is "real world" and lifelong. In addition, you can read up on topics related to children's schoolwork and interests. You can read the same books they are reading. This lets you discuss what they like and are learning with them, and it gives them further reason to read and connect with what they are reading.

Help children become writers. Make books, preserve children's writings, encourage letters or e-mail with a known, safe adult or pen-pal, write notes and give children reason to write you notes, and add brief descriptions or written memories to the photos in your albums.

By late second or third grade, the school expects students will learn from what they read on their own. It's okay to read textbooks aloud with the children to help them grasp this special use of reading. Good informational readers ask questions, predict, change their predictions, connect what they read to what they already know, monitor their own comprehension, and organize information in their minds. You can model this behavior.

Some children who are physically active and high energy can read, but they don't accept sedentary activities well, so they don't spend time reading. For these students, find books and magazines about what they like, keep it pleasant, keep interest alive, and encourage them to read something even in short spurts so that skill continues to develop.

As school becomes more complex, adults may realize children aren't "getting" the reading process. If a child is still struggling with reading at third grade, it is high time for intervention. There are school programs, commercial programs, tutors, homework helpers, and probably other options. Keep your reading with the child affirming and happy. Sometimes it helps family relations to transfer the business of helping with reading to a tutor. Reading problems need to be dealt with, but if reading becomes misery or overwhelms the child's life, it won't help reading skill and other problems develop.

What parents can do while children are learning to read

Surround the child with books, magazines, and printed material about their interests and what they are studying. Enlist the help of other people in the child's life. There are numerous children's magazines for this early-middle reading level and sometimes they are more appealing to children than books. Lots of children who won't read fiction will read science and animal stories and sports books and other non-fiction at this stage. There are now picture books for older children. Children's Web sites can help, too.

Read up on topics related to children's schoolwork and their interests. If they see you value reading and knowledge, it demonstrates that reading is "real world" and lets you discuss what they like and are learning with them.

Keep reading aloud. It still helps make reading fun and it is usually good family time. Most children comprehend at a higher level than they read until well into middle school.

There is ample evidence children get to be better readers simply by reading. Do anything you can to just get them reading. Helping them write their ideas helps, too.

Even if students only want to read one kind of book or series at this point, humor them. They are building the reading skill they need to branch out later. If they are stuck on one topic, try connecting them with different kinds of literature on the topic.

By third grade the school moves away from teaching students to read and expects students to learn by reading on their own. Parents can read textbooks aloud to help children learn about this special use of reading. Good informational readers ask questions, predict, connect what they read to what they already know, monitor their own comprehension, and organize information in their minds. You can model this behavior.

Some children at this point are active and can read but don't. For these students use some of the tips above to keep reading pleasant and keep interest alive. But at some point parents may realize a child really can't handle the reading demands of the grade level. If a child is still struggling with reading processes at mid-second grade and there has been no special effort to help, it is time for intervention. Start with a discussion with the school. There are several options, and most schools have extra help of some kind. Meanwhile keep your reading with the child affirming and happy. If reading feels like punishment or loss, children won't read.

If your child has a reading problem, parents have two tasks that are equally important and hard to balance. First, you need to get some help for your child and figure out how to get the child to practice reading. Second, you must not let the reading problem overwhelm the child's life. Keep things the child is good at and enjoys an active part of his or her days. There is enough hard stuff at school for children who are poor readers; your job as a parent is to keep the child intact in spite of the reading problem.

Summer Reading – fun and more than fun

Each year, the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) does a study of education in the United States called “The Nation’s Report Card.” When the reading section for 2000 was released, once again, as in all previous years, the study found **children who report reading more pages daily, in and out of school, have higher scores on reading achievement.** Students who reported reading for fun every day had higher average scores than students who reported reading for fun less frequently.

Other experience and research continues to indicate that for many, perhaps most, learning the simple act of reading increases reading skill. As people read, they get better at it. That seems to be true at all levels and stages of reading development. Now researchers are suggesting the experience children have with books before they even enter school may be the deciding factor for how well they learn to read in the first place. In addition, the experience and incidental knowledge children gain from recreational reading increases their ability to comprehend what they read.

So – add to all the other benefits of a Summer Reading Program the knowledge that recreational readers become better readers. Children who are reading for fun at any level are becoming better readers.

Here is word about what parents can do over the summer to help reading achievement the rest of the year. Summer Reading Programs and other efforts that mix children and reading help children read better, learn more, and achieve in school. Even children who are struggling readers will benefit from the library’s Summer Reading Program; perhaps struggling readers need it most of all. Debate continues about the best way to teach reading and remediate reading problems, but the research from every side of the debate agrees that recreational reading improves reading skill and motivates children to read. If children are spending time reading, they are becoming better readers!

Summer reading tips for parents of children who are learning to read

Summer Reading Programs are a great opportunity for your children to remember, practice, and enlarge their new reading skills. Although they may not be able to read everything they are interested in, the library has books they can read and others you and your children can read together. The library can help you surround your child with books of all kinds and find out which ones he or she likes best.

Explore and share the world of books for new readers. It's better than it ever has been. The popular Dr. Seuss books for new readers have been joined by many others. Some things that make a book good for new readers are: humor, patterns, illustrations, words that are easy but not so easy that the story gets lost, predictability, repetition, rhyme, large print, white space, and arrangement of the words on the page in meaning units.

For a lot of children, learning to read is hard work and they worry about it. They need adults who believe in them and pleasant reading experiences to motivate them to keep trying. Be very proud of every word the child learns and every sentence the child reads. Reassure the child that he or she is learning and we all learn a little at a time.

Have children read to you as often as possible keeping it as pleasant as possible. This may mean you take turns in the reading so the child doesn't get too tired. Children can also read to you or each other while you are preparing supper or folding laundry or in the car.

When you read aloud at the children's reading level, read to them with all the expression and appreciation you use for more complex stories. Children learn from this model.

Keep reading aloud; it bridges the gap. Reading aloud reminds children that reading is worth the effort, expands the world of books, and gives them something to aim for. Being read to is a pleasant activity in the midst of the stress of the new school situation. Children at this stage can comprehend much more than they can read. When you read to them mix things at their understanding level with things close to their reading level.

Point out words in the environment that the child can now read: *STOP, Mall, sale, in, out, push, pull, Pizza Hut*. This is a lifelong use of reading and builds the child's confidence.

Add reading and word games to summer activities. There are commercial word games and computer games for new readers. You can modify other games into word games. Make sets of "Go Fish" card games where the match is words in different typefaces (do you have a "go"?). Make concentration games where the match is a word in capitals and a word in lower case or a picture and a word. Replace the cards in *Candyland* with cards that have the words for the colors or the chart in *Cootie* with one that says "leg" instead of the picture. If new and more experienced readers are playing a game together, alter the scoring in traditional word games such as *Scrabble* and go for the total group score, or try to hit a certain family group score by a certain date. You can also have children play in teams with new and more experienced readers together on the same team.

Dolch List

The Dolch reading list contains the 220 most commonly used words in English reading and writing. This version of the list is arranged from most used to less used words. These words should be so familiar to children that they can read them automatically.

the to and * he # a	I you it * of in *	was said his # that # she #	for on they but # had #
at * him # with up * all *	look # is # her there some	out as be # have go #	we # am * then # little down #
do can # could when # did #	what so see # not # were	get # them like # one this	my # would me # will # yes
big # went # are come if	now # long # no # came # ask *	very an * over your its	ride # into just # blue red #
from good any about around	want don't how # know right	put too got # take # where	every pretty jump # green four
away old * by their here	saw # call # after well # think #	ran # let # help make # going	sleep brown yellow five # six #
walk to or before eat *	again play # who been may	stop # off never seven eight	cold # today fly myself around

tell # much keep give work	first try new must start #	black # white # ten # does bring #	goes write # always drink # once
soon # made run # gave open	has find # only us * three	our better hold # buy funny	warm ate * full those done
use fast # say # light # pick #	hurt pull cut # kind # booth	sit # which fall # carry small #	under read why own found #
wash show hot # because far #	live # draw # clean grow # best #	upon these sing # together please	thank # wish # many shall laugh

* root word for a family such as and, band, hand, etc.

part of a group of words with similar patterns, part of a word family such as an man, can, ran, etc.

Using this list

Since these are words children will see frequently and need to be able to read, they are a good word bank for words for flashcards and word games. Commonly used words such as these are often irregular in spelling and children need to make them “sight words,” that is, words a reader simply recognizes without having to actively sound out or decode them.

The annotations have been added to this copy of the list to help you group words by sound patterns and add other words to them for games and activities that build on the sound and spelling patterns that are becoming familiar to children through learning the words on the list.

The * indicates that by adding letters in front of this small word you can build others on the same pattern. For example, by putting letters in front of “old” you can generate bold, cold, fold, gold, hold, mold, sold, and told. The * beside “in” tells you that it is a syllable that you can use to generate bin, fin, gin, kin, pin, Rin Tin Tin, sin, tin, win. The symbol # tells you the word is part of a group on the same pattern but not the root syllable. For example, “far” can be grouped with bar, jar, par, star, spar, and tar. Fast can be grouped with blast, cast, last, mast, and past.

Working Together to Grow Children who Love Literacy

A reproducible booklet for parents and librarians, by Jacque Wuertenberg

About Reading:

At home and at the library we can work together to encourage the same literacy strategies. Youngsters need to hear that reading and writing are important! Youngsters need to hear this from many different people both at home and at the library.

The important people at home and at the library can make a difference. You are where the action is. You know or can find out what youngsters are interested in and what they care about. That's also the easiest thing to write about. If you have a dinosaur specialist or a baseball lover, use this information to help your youngster get started writing. Encourage reading and writing on topics of interest: the family dog, the solar system, horses, soccer, etc. Help youngsters find books to read on these topics. Note: Avid readers know where to find their favorite books. A fifth grader in Toronto said,

"I can take you to the section in the library about "wolves" with my eyes closed. That's how much I like wolves!"

Read aloud to youngsters even when they can read on their own. Your read-aloud voice and time you spend says to the youngster, "I care enough about you to spend this uninterrupted time reading aloud to you just so we can be together." Here are some dependable choices for read-aloud books:

- Favorite authors.
- Topics of interest to a child.
- Your favorite growing-up books.

Don't hesitate to read these favorites again and again. Children love repetition and often ask, "Read it again." Children gain confidence in knowing they know what is happening in a favorite book. "After all," a youngster told me, "We don't eat spaghetti once." Some of us enjoy seeing old movies, singing favorite songs, hearing often-told family tales, working in the garden, fishing, or watching baseball again and again. Bill Martin Jr. says that we often stay with a book for as long as that book has a message for us. A favorite book of mine is Margery

Williams' story of *The Velveteen Rabbit*. If we are together, sooner or later, I'll read the part to you where the skin horse is talking to the velveteen rabbit about what it means to become "real." My daughter often said, "It hasn't been easy growing up in this house and hearing *The Velveteen Rabbit* read aloud so often." A friend suggested I send her a copy of the book when she went away to school. My daughter said she read the book to her roommate before she went to sleep. Youngsters hold onto the things that have been given to them by people who are important to them. Reading aloud is a gift that keeps on giving.

Also, read aloud your youngster's own writing. Think of someone you know you can depend on, find that person or call that person on the phone, and read aloud a favorite piece that a youngster has written. Do this while the youngster is nearby and can hear what you are saying. The message youngsters get is that what they write is important enough for you to share it with another person. Do this often and your youngster will want to write more and more.

Read aloud favorite poems and rhymes. Check the children's section of your library for poetry books on favorite topics. Compilers such as Lee Bennett Hopkins and Eloise Greenfield have gathered poems on subjects children want to read about. Shel Silverstein's *Where the Sidewalk Ends* has some of my favorites including: "Sarah, Sylvia, Cynthia Stout wouldn't take the garbage out. . . ." The rhythm, rhyme and repetition provide youngsters with the opportunity to reinforce what they already know and to play with language. When you are reading aloud, pause before a key word (often a noun or a word at the end of a phrase) and encourage youngsters to finish it with you. For example, when you share the old favorite, "I Never Saw a Purple Cow," pause after you have read it several times and your youngster will join you in saying "cow." In addition, Dennis Lee says in his book, *Alligator Pie*, that children will inadvertently put their own words in when they catch the rhythm and rhyme of a verse that has been read aloud. This is one of the first steps in youngsters seeing themselves actively involved in the reading process.

About Writing:

Invite your youngster to draw before writing. Most youngsters are told to write, and then if they have time they may draw. Art can be a catalyst for writing and often encourages a writer to add details. Encourage this process by setting up a "Make-It Box" supplied with a variety of art materials:

- Old magazines, leftover cloth, ribbons, etc. for collage.

- Stamp pads for thumb printing.
- Straws and food coloring for straw blowing.
- Different colors, sizes, and kinds of papers for writing.

After a youngster has drawn, encourage elaboration by asking, “What is happening in your picture? Tell me more about it.” With younger children, listen for a word, phrase or sentence that describes the picture and write it down on a peel-off label that can be placed on the piece of art. Your child now has a titled picture.

As you listen to youngsters occasionally say, “Tell me that again. It is so well said that I want to write it down.” Become a scribe and take dictation. Write down exactly what is being said, word for word. Read it back and ask the writer if you have transcribed it correctly. Remember:

Writing is composing – thinking of the idea.
Transcribing is putting the idea into print.

Don’t feel guilty when you are transcribing. Why would you? You are providing youngsters with the message that writing is for reading. Youngsters soon choose to pick up a pencil and continue writing, with the assurance you will want to read this next piece too.

Encourage youngster to write their reading experiences and to write about family happenings. Here are some books that will help you get started:

The Important Book by Margaret Wise Brown
The important thing about grandpa is...
The important thing about my dog is...
The important thing about *Charlotte’s Web* is...

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day By Judith Viorst
A book about the everyday nuisances we all know.

If It Weren’t For You by Charlotte Zolotow
Sibling rivalry with a happy ending.

Someday by Charlotte Zolotow
A book of wishes and dreams. Invite each family member to add a page. Imagine what the family pets might say and add a pet’s page too

Talk about yourself as a writer. Say aloud, “I am writing this grocery list. I am writing a note to grandma. I am writing this recipe. I am writing this idea down so that I don’t forget it.” Keep a day book, a blank book with a spiral binding that opens flat. Use different colors and play with space and the way you write the words. Use your day book as a repository for things that are important to you. Add:

- Quotes about favorite things and from favorite people.
- Thoughts you may want to later develop.
- Moments and notions you want to hold onto.
- Favorite lines from songs, movies and books.

Record youngsters’ words in your day book also. Children become so excited when someone is interested in an idea that they have that they will want to show others that they are included in your day book. “Scrap booking” fans understand how much fun it is to give presence and quality to a snapshot with background papers. Have fun with your day book. Add a border, matte and mount a favorite poem and collage several photos together by overlapping the edges. Consider a “Summer Reading Day Book” with passages from favorite books.

Write notes to youngsters. Here’s a note writing story from a mother and her twelve-year old son:

Carol began to write notes to her twelve year old in the hope he would answer her. On the first day, she wrote, “I’ve hidden two cookies. Your Mom. P.S. Here’s a hint. They’re in your closet under that pile of dirty clothes.” He wrote, “Dear Mom, I found the cookies, but I didn’t find the clothes. Your son.”

At home, include notes in lunchboxes, under pillows, taped to mirrors, and on the refrigerator door. At the library, consider asking youngsters to write notes about favorite books for the next reader to find. Write encouraging messages and messages inviting youngsters to respond. Sometimes it is easier to say things in writing than to speak them.

A friend of mine said he had lost his temper and swatted his five year old before he left to go out for dinner. When he returned, there was a note on his pillow from his son that said, "You not only hurted me on my bottom, you hurted me in my heart."

Set up a writing and publishing center at home and in the library. Provide materials to help writing and publishing. Include:

- Paper
- Cardboard for book covers
- Wallpaper and contact paper to make book covers
- Blank books
- Different size tablets
- Binders with clear protective sheets, making instant books (Get binders with a plastic front for the book title.)
- Small photo packets (Put photo on one side and place the writing opposite.)
- Yarn, curtain hooks, and shoestrings to hold books together
- Stapler

Steven used 29 staples to staple the eight-page car book he had just written. Children soon learn that pages in a book have to be securely put together or they will fall apart with frequent readings. Feature homemade books on the coffee table or wherever prized possessions are kept. Create a separate shelf in the library to feature new writers. Add a page at the back of the book titled, "Readers' Comments." Invite friends and family members to add encouraging content comments and read these aloud also.

Jacque Wuertenberg, author of this booklet, is a Missourian, a language arts consultant, a friend of all libraries, a professor, and a parent.

After you read to your children, try these other ideas to help them read well

Bonus:

Some of them let an adult have hands busy with other tasks at the same time!

- Remember books on tape for trips, long commutes, and busy times like while you are fixing supper.
- Put magnetic letters on the refrigerator or a metal board or cabinet.
- Play alphabet games; there are commercial ones, or make your own.
- Look for letters and read signs while riding in the car.
- Keep books in the car for commutes or a quick read while waiting in the car or in a waiting room.
- Since many schools are now using phonics as the basis of reading instruction, one of the most important things we can do for kids at this stage is help them get used to language sounds and the way sounds combine in words. Turn these into word games. (Do this early while kids still tolerate silliness.)
- Play with rhyming words. “Cat, cat –what rhymes with cat? That fat rat sat.” “Ball, ball what rhymes with ball? All, small, tall, Paul.” Yes there are a few we don’t say in polite company and you will have to tell the child that. And you will get nonsense words, but this makes it fun. The point of this game is getting good at the sounds of English, not learning words.
- Another game that helps children get ready to read is to verbalize the sounds in a word and then blend them into the word itself. The game goes like this: “Guess this word.” One player (the adult) says the sounds that make up a word: *f-ih-sh* and the other player (the child) guesses the word: *fish!* Try others: *st-ah-p Stop! B-aw-l Ball! S-ah-ul-eee Sally!* After a child gets good at this, the players can take turns. You recognize this game as practice in sounding out words.
- Another good word game: Can you think of words that start like zoo? Zip, zipper, Zoë, zing. How about words that end like Zoo? Sue, blue, too, you. (Yes, the spelling is different, which is why at this step you are only doing this orally.) Be sure to include more than beginning sounds, since all the sounds in a word are important.

- Get the library habit now – let the whole family get it.
- Tell stories and have conversations; this is the kind of language that is in the books children meet at school.
- Extend what you read in books; make soup after you read about soup, read about tractors or seeds during planting season, add books to the holidays or life events, use books to back up your family's beliefs and cultural traditions.
- Puppets and impromptu drama extend the meanings of books and expand the child's language skills and sense of word play.
- Help children write. Reading and writing are two ends of the same process, and doing one helps the other.
- Take dictation and have your child watch as his/her language turns into print. Then read it back and help the child read or recite it back. This is an important experience. (Later while the child illustrates what you wrote down, you can be doing another task)
- Make books of all kinds. (This helps with reading and writing – and later these books are family treasures.) Staple pages, sew pages, use notebook rings, write in cheap blank books, illustrate tiny books with stickers, and glue words on fancy paper. Make up stories, illustrate songs or rhymes, make your own alphabet books, or use a favorite book as a pattern. If your child thinks of himself/herself as a writer he/she is more likely to be a reader.
- Make books to tell grandparents or adult friends about what is going on in your life. Homemade books can remember vacations or special events. (Later they become family treasures.)
- As children get older you can talk about what might have happened in a book or what a character should have done or what might happen next. Then you can even help children write a sequel or an alternative story. They can illustrate independently.
- Write things and let your child see you writing.
- Help your child write things: lists, notes, letters, reminders, cards. Use post-it notes, fancy paper, colored pens, or anything to make writing and illustrating a neat experience.

What do they mean by that?

Words Reading Teachers Use

Decoding: Decoding is the process of figuring out what words the letters on the page stand for. Decoding involves some comprehension or understanding of the message also. Occasionally a reader can say written words without meaning attached and this is often called “word calling.”

Comprehension: It is necessary to know or figure out what word printed letters represent, but the real point of reading is to understand what the author is saying and construct some kind of meaning from it. Comprehension is the process of understanding what the passage says and constructing meaning from the message.

Fluency: Fluency is how smoothly and quickly a reader reads, how well words and sentences flow together almost automatically so a reader can get the meaning of a text. A reader who is fluent reads smoothly and makes it sound easy or skillful. Sometimes readers who are not fluent concentrate so much on trying to put the words together, they have trouble understanding what they read. Readers who do not develop fluency generally struggle and have trouble understanding.

Context: Context is what is around the words and sentences that help the reader make sense of them. A “field” in a book about Old MacDonald will be different from a “field” in a book about careers. A cookbook is read differently from a road sign or a storybook. In books for beginning readers the pictures are often important context. The context of an unfamiliar word may help a reader figure out what the word is or what an unfamiliar word means.

Phonemic awareness: A phoneme is the smallest sound unit of language that makes one word different from another. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear these small sounds and understand how they blend into words and sentences and how the words change when the phonemes change. For example, phonemic awareness would help a reader hear that *pin* is different from *bin* by one sound, that *cut* can change to *cup*, how *back* is different from both *bake* and *black*, that *red* is partly like and partly unlike *rod*, and *moved* is *move* with an added sound. Phonemic awareness is one of the “hot” topics in reading instruction, and both argument and study on the topic continue. Some researchers hold that poor phonemic awareness may explain why some learners cannot “sound out” words or use phonics very well.

Word families: This phrase means several things, but usually in beginning reading it means a group of words spelled and sounding the same except for one letter. The “all” family would be *all, ball, call, fall, hall, mall, stall, tall, wall*. The “ate” family would be *ate, Kate, fate, hate, late, mate, Nate, rate, slate, Tate*. Words like *cab, cad, Cal, can, cap, and cat*, might also be considered a word family. So might *cap, cop, cup*. Word families are a device for practicing sound-letter combinations and for building confidence. Word families are helpful for phonemic awareness, decoding, spelling, word games, and practice for beginning or struggling readers. (There is a method of teaching reading, sometimes called the “linguistic” method, based on such word families.)

Language experience: Language experience is an approach to teaching reading based on activities and stories developed from experiences of the learner. The learner dictates a story about personal experiences to the teacher. The teacher writes down the story as the learner watches. Then student and teacher read the story together and do activities based on the story until the learner associates the written form of the word with the spoken. Language experience is often used with struggling readers, and it blends well with other methods. Parents can use it to help children make books and keep journals.

Phonics: Phonics is a method that directly teaches beginning readers the relation of letters to sounds. This is usually what teachers mean when they talk about “sounding out” words: knowing what sound each letter stands for and then blending those sounds to make words. Readers must be able to do this easily and quickly, so they don’t lose the meaning of the passage in an effort to figure out what the words are. The irregularity of English spelling is a problem in phonics instruction, but consonants are mostly regular and more syllables are regular than irregular.

Whole language: “Whole language” can mean different things to different people. It is more like a philosophy than a method. In reading it insists on keeping language “whole”; that is, not breaking it up into skills and exercises and artificially written lessons. It also insists on “authentic” texts and activities such as real storybooks, letters, and journals rather than worksheet exercises a child would see only in school. It is sometimes controversial, but many publishers of reading and writing materials have modified their approaches to reflect the whole language philosophy and include whole language activities. It is not the same as the “look-say” method, which relies on memorizing words, although some people confuse the two.

Grade level: Through the years, educators have looked at how children in certain grades perform academically and have set standards for how children in a certain grade ought to be able to perform to keep up with the progress the system expects and to not fall behind academic expectations. Grade level is usually determined by a standardized test or by how well a student handles academic tasks at that grade level.

Standardized test/measure: Standardized tests have been given to a very large sample group and the standards for certain age or grade levels are set by analyzing the way this large group achieved on the test. Then the people who take the test afterward are placed and evaluated on the basis of the standard set by that group. The tests must be given the same way every time and the answers must always be scored the same way for this system to work. To make this happen, the tests themselves are usually multiple choice or some other closed answer system. Standardized tests are usually paper and pencil, teachers cannot help while students take them, and they are scored with a key or by machine. They yield scores like grade levels that let schools compare an individual’s score to the standards set earlier, and also make it possible to compare the performance of a group at one school with another school or schools.

Informal reading assessment: A teacher or counselor may listen to a child read and make observations and evaluations about how the child reads and perhaps how the child reads in relation to other children of the same grade or age. Informal assessments are usually done one-

to-one, and there is interaction between the child and the person doing the test. Informal reading assessment is focused on the individual and the reading behaviors the tester observes. It is usually done for the purpose of trying to figure out what the strengths and weaknesses of an individual are in relation to reading. It may also be done to gain extra information in addition to the scores of a standardized test, or to get a feel for whether standardized test scores accurately reflects a student's reading ability.

Miscue analysis: Miscue analysis is an informal assessment technique from the whole language framework helping teachers look at the reading process of an individual student. Working either from a tape of the student reading, or working live with the student, the examiner makes a series of coded marks on a copy of the text the student is reading as the student reads. The teacher marks miscues such as substituted words, repeated words, self-corrections missed words and many others.

Invented spelling: Children (and adults!) often write words the way they sound according to their understanding of how letters and sounds work together. "Correct" English spelling is often so irregular, it may distract learners in the early stages of literacy. Allowing children or new readers to use invented, inferred, or "best guess" spelling as they write lets them use their energy for the writing process and think about what they have to say rather than limiting their writing to words they can spell. It also gives them practice with sound-letter relationships. When Standard English spelling is necessary, words are revised and corrected through the editing process and through direct spelling instruction. Looking at a student's invented spelling often provides good clues to how the student understands the sounds and letters of written English. Research hasn't arrived at a good answer to why some people are naturally good spellers and others are not. It is probably related to a combination of phonemic awareness and visual memory.

The Reading-Writing Connection

Writing and reading are two ends of the same process. Help children become writers. It really will help them become readers.

Write down stories as they dictate. Let them watch as their speech becomes writing from your pen; this is an important transformation. Then read together the passage they have dictated until they can read it easily. You can keep a notebook of these stories. Read them over again from time to time. Some may be special enough to illustrate and share.

Help children make their own books. Inspiration can come from commercial books. Ideas abound: think of alphabet books, made-up stories, information about a topic, holidays, song lyrics, imitations of published books, an experience or adventure, and on and on. Children can illustrate their books by drawing, painting, paper cutting, with magazine pictures, clip art, or photographs. Laminating the pages or using poster board to make the final copy makes the book sturdier. Then you can help the young authors bind the books with notebook rings, yarn, staples, brads, or other ingenious solutions. You might even pay a photocopy center to bind special efforts.

Your group might pair with a teacher whose class makes books and host an authors' party or pay to have a class anthology photocopied and bound.

Children can compose poems, remembrances, or short essays and frame them as gifts, awards, or bulletin board pieces.

Worrying too much about standard spelling and grammar in the first draft seems to interfere with creativity in young writers, but teaching the revising and editing process is a realistic activity. The "publishing" process is a good place to teach standard spelling and grammar.

Help children make notebooks or scrapbooks of photos, clippings, programs, cards, or even assignments and ads that reflect their lives. Then help them annotate or caption what they choose to paste into the notebooks.

Set up written correspondence with a child or a group of children via notes, postcards, and letters, through a special mailbox in a classroom, or by becoming a mystery correspondent who leaves notes and asks for responses. Safe e-mail exchanges are also a great tool to get children writing.

Section Four

Supporting Independent
Reading: Serving Upper
Elementary School
Students

Literacy notes for libraries serving children in upper elementary school

At about third grade level, reading expectations in most schools change. At about third grade the school expects children will begin to read text independently and learn from it. The shift has traditionally been expressed as “moving from learning to read to reading to learn.” Many theoreticians now find that distinction too rigid, but it does indicate that the amount of school instruction that depends on children reading for themselves grows each year.

For some students this shift is the first time the reading task becomes sufficiently complex that teachers and parents realize there is a problem. Unfortunately for these students, by third grade most schools are finished teaching the basic reading process except in remedial situations. By fifth or sixth grade, schools assume children will read and comprehend text on at least the literal level; in other words, children have the basics of literacy. The focus turns to increased comprehension and establishing independent reading behaviors. Even in some remedial sessions the focus changes to teaching compensation strategies.

The important literacy tasks of late elementary school are:

- ✓ gaining reading fluency,
- ✓ becoming an independent reader,
- ✓ making more meaning on more levels in response to text,
- ✓ and being able to learn from written text, and learn from text with fewer pictures and more words.

Fluency means reading smoothly and quickly so the language flows together with meaning, and figuring out what the words are doesn't interfere with comprehension. Fluency requires strong decoding skills and helps children become independent and willing readers. *Independent readers* read silently to themselves for more than a few minutes with meaning and some memory of what they read. They read age-appropriate text well enough that they don't need help decoding words; they understand most of the words, and they process the text enough to understand what the author is saying. They also respond to the message with thoughts of their own. These processes are also crucial to being able to learn from text.

Ultimately, good readers comprehend and make meaning on more than the recall or retelling level. They compare what they have just read to other things they have read, they monitor their own comprehension, they predict and confirm their predictions, they agree or disagree with what the author said, they react, they challenge, they evaluate and begin to read critically, and they make connections to other things they know or have read. These skills are gradually developed in elementary school and the school system begins to expect them and coaches students to practice them.

All public school third graders in Missouri are tested with some standardized test, and those whose test scores are more than a year behind should receive special help. A Missouri law mandates retention if reading skills are still a year or more below expectations at the end of

fourth grade. This is often a crisis point for children and their parents, so the literacy of upper elementary school children is becoming an important issue. This law pushes schools, educational support systems, and families to take action when children aren't reading well. Unfortunately, both educational research and experience indicate retention, especially retention as late as fourth grade, seldom solves academic problems. Dropouts are more likely to have been retained and the negative social and personal consequences of retention may set up other problems adding to the reading problem. So anything libraries and other educational support systems can do to help children reach grade level reading by late third grade has benefits beyond literacy.

There are surprisingly few studies about the basic literacy process in upper elementary children. Several things do emerge consistently, however.

The gaps between readers and non-readers widen in late elementary and junior high. Readers who are "on track" spend these years learning to handle an ever-widening array of written materials, and they learn to make meaning in response to what they read on deeper and more varied levels. A place for the library collections and programming is already carved out for these students.

Those who are not on track tend to lose ground at this point. There may be several problems. Students who are unable to decode continue to struggle to determine what words the print on the page represent. Other students can decode but find it so slow and laborious that they have no effort left for processing the message. Still others have learned to identify words well enough, but they somehow believe that the essence of reading is word calling, and they do not seek a message in the text. Some students can read the words but make only the most rudimentary meaning from the text; they don't interact with the text, and this limits not only comprehension but also higher-level responses. At this point *aliteracy* begins to be a problem for some children; they can read, but they don't or won't for a variety of reasons. Since readers become better by reading, aliterate students usually fall behind and don't develop background knowledge or higher-level comprehension skills. Children who read, are read to, and have a chance to talk about what they read, retain the advantage they had in the earlier grades.

The Center for Improvement of Early Reading (CIERA) tells us:

Proficient reading in third grade and above is sustained and enhanced by programs that adhere to four fundamental features: (1) deep and wide opportunities to read, (2) the acquisition of new knowledge and vocabulary, partially through wide reading but also through explicit attention to acquiring networks of new concepts through instruction, (3) an emphasis on the influence that the kinds of text (e.g., stories versus essays) and the ways writers organize particular texts has on understanding, and (4) explicit attention to assisting students in reasoning about text. (<http://www.ciera.org/library/instrsrc/principles/>)

While libraries are seldom in the reading instruction business, libraries readily support at least three of these features through both collection development and programming.

Collection

For children who are developing expected reading skill (in most communities this is well over half of them), the library collection is now a major vehicle for expanding their reading skills and helping them establish the recreational reading habit. The library collection offers older children deep and wide opportunities to read at very low cost to their families. Reading a variety of material not only builds reading skill but also promotes acquisition of new knowledge and vocabulary. New knowledge and vocabulary then advance reading skill as well as general knowledge and school achievement.

Recommendations for helping students improve fluency include using text at a level manageable for the young readers. This includes more easily decoded texts for struggling readers. Middle grade books at easy reading levels are harder to find than books for primary readers, but adding them to the collection is a strong plus for children moving from deliberate decoding to fluent independent reading. Series books are also good for readers at this stage; their predictability eases reading since the reader can use the same expectations and background knowledge for all the books in a series. Series books may also “hook” a young reader who likes the topic and encourage them to read the next one and the next one and the next one, building fluency and reading experience in the process. While many librarians and teachers wish children were more interested in great literature than in series books, books that simply provide a pleasant and non-stressful reading experience have an important place as literacy tools. They help children develop the reading skills that will someday let them experience great literature.

For children still struggling with print, there are a growing number of what are usually called high-low (or hi-lo) books; that is, books combining high interest with low reading level. Adding these to the collection is a good literacy move. Audio books provide a reader who is still struggling a chance to participate in the joy of books. Audio books help older children develop higher-level comprehension and meaning strategies while bypassing the print that is still troublesome. Audio books have their literacy advantage, too, especially if the student will follow along with a copy of the book. This gives them a model of fluent reading and some experience with text. (There is a method of remedial reading based on tracking a text being read by a tape.)

The acquisition of new knowledge and vocabulary characterizes successful students at this level. Once gained, new knowledge becomes background knowledge to help readers understand and find meaning in new texts. Many researchers and theorists believe background knowledge does more than enrich the reading process; it is a basic factor in all reading skill. Background knowledge and previous experience not only make instructive text clearer but also establish a framework out of which readers understand and interpret a text. For example, fantasy is read differently from non-fiction, and text can convey sarcasm or nonsense as well as factual information. Reading builds on itself as it builds background knowledge for more effective reading which, in turn, builds more knowledge.

Although some researchers question the value of unguided silent reading as an instructional strategy for struggling readers, the tie between recreational reading and higher reading achievement is almost universally accepted. During these upper elementary years, schools,

libraries, and families are laying the foundation for the knowledge, growth, and experience that comes with lifelong reading.

Parents of children who are not reading well now are faced with the tasks of advocating for their children and sometimes intervening. Therefore, it is also a good thing for the general library collection to include books and resources to help them do this. (Home schoolers will appreciate some of the same texts.)

Programming

This is the point at which the phenomenon of children becoming better readers simply by reading is strongest. Encourage children to read.

Children this age are old enough for book groups and interactive events that help them process different kinds of text and styles, reason about text, and connect with what they read. (This is also the point at which books and programming can begin to show children the world of human experience that has been preserved in print and can be accessed by reading.) The Internet is full of unit plans and discussion questions based on specific books. Studies indicate helping readers preview a text helps them comprehend it. Previewing is easily added to book discussions, conversations, and book talks.

Recommendations for helping students improve fluency include using text at a level manageable for the young readers, yet stretches them a bit (including more easily decoded texts for struggling readers). Choosing books at different difficulty levels for programs or discussions helps libraries reach all readers. Recommendations for helping students improve fluency include multiple readings of a familiar text. Libraries might set this up through readers theater, poetry groups, or having mid-schoolers read to younger children. Recommendations for helping students improve fluency include modeling fluent reading. Librarians have been providing that since preschool story hours! Finding ways to have a fluent adult reader model the process for these intermediate readers is still a good idea; audio books also help. There are many things libraries can do to support upper elementary and middle school readers as they make the important shift to independent reading and learn to handle different kinds of text.

Libraries are in the perfect position to create events and situations to help children want to read; examples might be a read-a-thon, a book club, inviting older children to become reading buddies with younger ones, a drama group, or even a reading incentive program. Summer reading programs also fit in this category. Summer reading may well be the best literacy bargain in America since it encourages children to read over the summer, thus improving their reading, getting them interested in many topics, and counteracting the danger of their losing ground in reading skill over the summer.

Many libraries also support and participate in the activities of groups like scouts and after school programs that strive to broaden children's incidental learning and knowledge of the world. Anything that broadens children's interests, knowledge base, and view of the world impacts their reading comprehension. Children this age are often eager to be teens. Sometimes versions of the

programming a library uses for teens will catch their interest and send them the message to keep on coming to the library and reading when they get to be teens.

And as a final benefit, children this age are often still willing to interact with adults and share what they are interested in with anyone who will listen or give them access to materials they like. It is a time in their lives when grownups still have good influence, and libraries can take full advantage of this stage to influence them in the direction of literacy!

Mandatory Retention Of Fourth Grade Students In Missouri Who Are Reading Below Third Grade Level

Missouri Revised Statute 167.645 (also called also called Senate Bill 319) says children who are more than a year behind in reading achievement must receive extra instruction, which often includes summer school, and they must be retained in fourth grade if they are not reading at third grade level by the end of fourth grade.

The text of the statute is available at <http://www.moga.state.mo.us/statutes/c100-199/1670000645.htm> or may be found through the general introduction page for the revised statutes (<http://www.moga.state.mo.us/homestat.asp>) by using the keywords “retention and reading.”

A readable explanation of the law is available from **Practical Parenting Partnerships**. It may be printed from their Web page, <http://www.pppctr.org/readingandretention.asp>.

Practical Parenting Partnerships may also be contacted at
2412-C Hyde Park Road
Jefferson City, MO 65109
Phone: (573) 761-7770
Fax: (573) 761-7760
E-mail: pppctr@pppctr.org

Summer Reading – Libraries Supporting Literacy

Each year, the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) completes a study of education in the United States called “The Nation’s Report Card.” When the reading section for the year 2000 was released, one finding was the same as all the NAEP studies that came before it: **children who report reading more pages daily, in and out of school, have higher scores on reading achievement.** Students who reported reading for fun on their own time every day had higher average scores than students who reported reading for fun less frequently. As before, the fourth graders who reported reading 11 or more pages daily for school and for homework scored higher than students who read fewer pages daily.

The 1999 National Center for Educational Statistics report, *The Condition of Education*, states flatly: Research has shown reading ability is positively correlated with the extent to which students read recreationally. Educators are increasingly encouraging their students to read and write on their own, outside of school.

Other experience and research continues to indicate that for many, perhaps most, learners the simple act of reading increases reading skill. As people read, they get better at it. That seems to be true at all levels and stages of reading development. And now researchers are suggesting that the experience children have with books before they even enter school may be the deciding factor in how well they learn to read in the first place. In addition, the experience and incidental knowledge children gain from recreational reading increases their ability to comprehend what they read.

So – add to all the other benefits of a summer reading program the knowledge that recreational readers become better readers. Children who are reading for fun at any level are becoming better readers.

There is great concern in this country about the number of children who are not good readers. Some encouraging items for your information:

- ✓ Summer reading programs and other efforts like them help children achieve in school through helping them gain both general knowledge and reading skill.
- ✓ Summer reading programs and similar efforts can help raise the literacy level of children in the United States.
- ✓ Children who are struggling readers will benefit from the library’s summer reading program.
- ✓ Debate about the best way to teach reading and the best way to remediate reading problems continues, but all the research from every side of the debate agrees that recreational reading helps children become better readers and motivates children to keep on reading.
- ✓ And when children are reading they are getting better and better at it!

While society worries about reading achievement, libraries are doing something about it!

Activity Notes

Anything encouraging children to read more, re-read, discuss, re-tell, or write is a literacy activity!

Ideas:

- Readers' theater or pretend radio drama can be done impromptu with a few minutes practice and a little preparation.
- Pair or group children to prepare a dramatic reading of a poem for the group. With more practice, some might perform this reading for an outside group.
- Read something chorally as a large group, or with children in the group, joining in on repeated lines or taking the parts of characters.
- Reread the story with different individuals taking different parts.
- Invite older children in the group to be the guest reader for the second read-through of a short book, poem, or article.
- Older children can read to younger children individually or as guest readers during story time.
- Over the summer or a few sequential weekends, a group of children could put together a display or some information sheets or a booklet about a topic of interest to the community or to other kids.
- Act out a story just read or heard. This may be done impromptu for the fun of the moment or developed into a performance for another audience.
- Make a story into a puppet show or do a puppet show about other things happening to the characters.
- Write or tell a different version of a story just read.
- Imagine and write or tell a sequel or a "prequel."
- Act out the sequel, "prequel," or different version.
- Invite children to create a brief monologue explaining to the audience how a character in the book felt. They might use a puppet to present the thoughts.
- Stage a quick imaginary talk show with children taking the parts of the interviewer and characters in the book.

Encouraging Responses to Stories and Books

Jacque Wuertenberg

- What:** Invite youngsters to make connections with stories and books by responding to the text with guiding questions. Connecting to the text indicates a student's ability make meaning of the author's ideas and to relate to these ideas in a meaningful context and further comprehension.
- Why:** Ask guiding questions that allow youngsters to explore ideas together. These guiding questions provide opportunities for readers to carefully think and connect to the author, to the text, to each other, and to the community. Keep this period of time relaxed and joyful. This is a time for exploring ideas and notions about the story and/or book and often leads to further reading and additional research about the author and similar genres.
- What's Next:** Students also enjoy reading, thinking, and talking together about the stories and books they find of interest. Literature circles provide one way for youngsters to meet together and talk about a favorite book. Patterned after successful book study groups, lit circles function successfully with a few guidelines, such as when to meet and what pages and chapters will be discussed. Have volunteers who agree beforehand to look for specific points, such as interesting words, favorite quotations, and several of the most important things the author stated.
- Procedure:** **Before and during** the story and read aloud time:
- Invite youngsters to predict what will happen next. This strategy, developed by Russell Stauffer, and often referred to as a "Directed Reading Thinking Activity" (DRTA) suggests that the storyteller and/or reader occasionally stops and asks, "What do you think will happen next?" Youngsters now have an opportunity to refine their foreshadowing skills (in light of what just happened, what could happen next?).
 - The prediction that follows is now based on the reader's understanding of the author's style. As the reading continues, and additional information is gained, the reader frequently revises the original account. This strategy encourages comprehension.
 - **After** the story and/or read-aloud time, have fun with the following guiding questions:
 1. How did the storytelling/reading remind you of your own experience? What did the author say? How did it relate to your life?
 2. What were the most important ideas you discovered in the book.
 3. Why are they important to you?
 4. What were the most interesting words or phrases you encountered in the storytelling/reading? Why did they interest you?
 5. What "aha" moment did you have during the reading?
- Advantages:**
- Responding to text:** Youngsters enjoy listening and responding to the story and/or read aloud, and are eager to share their own experiences, ideas and create connections.
- Questioning strategy:** If a youngster responds by saying, "I don't know," when asked about the story, gently continue, "If you did know, what would you say?" Watch the joy on the youngster's faces, as they try to make meaning of the story and/or read aloud.

Dramatic Play and Improvisation

Jacque Wuertenberg

- What:** Bring language to life as you are reading aloud. Invite youngsters to add sound effects and other improvisations as the piece is reread.
- Why:** Tap into the various multiple intelligences and different learning styles by addressing auditory, visual and kinesthetic preferences.
- What's next:** Youngsters understand improvisation and often spend hours adding, changing and rearranging their own made-up scenes. Tap into this rich area of play, and help youngsters see, hear, and feel what they are reading by “playing the scenes” during read-alouds.
- Procedure:** Choose a piece to read aloud that provides opportunities for dramatic additions. For example:
- Read aloud a favorite piece such as: “I never saw a purple cow. I never hope to see one. But, I can tell you anyhow. I’d rather see than be one.”
 - Help youngsters internalize the piece you have just read aloud by adding these **three strategies**:
 1. **Echo Read:** Read the same piece aloud again and invite youngsters to echo each phrase. You say it. They say it.
 2. **Choral Read:** Next, invite youngsters to choral read it by saying it with you. Start by reading: “I never saw a purple (pause and invite the youngsters to join in and choral read with you as you say the word, “cow.” Continue pausing at key words.
 3. **Dramatic Play:** Bring language to life with dramatic play. Solicit help from the youngsters and request cow “moos” when you read it again and get to the word “cow.” Those who are wearing purple could also stand when the word “purple” is heard, etc.

Advantages:

Improvisation is easy and enjoyable: Invite animal and other sound effects and movement where all can take part without scripts to memorize.

Improvisation promotes comprehension: Youngsters eagerly add dramatic play when it is appropriate and, as it is needed.

Improvisation is a prelude to revision: Adding dramatic play can be a first step to understanding the role of revision in writing. Youngsters understand adding, changing and rearranging in dramatic play and often ask, “Can we do it again?” Rehearsal in drama can easily be understood and translated to the concept of revision (add, change, rearrange) in writing!

Creating Choral Readings

Jacque Wuertenberg

- What:** Bring language to life by showcasing favorite pieces with productions of choral readings. Choral reading is a group reading providing a community reading experience in much the same way as singing together in a choir.
- Why:** Youngsters who take part in choral readings experience the rigor of fluent oral reading and the joy of producing a memorable experience for themselves and possibly others when there is an audience available.
- What's next:** Choral readings are available already scripted into parts and can be found in library collections. In addition, Paul Fleischman's book, *Joyful Noise*, is a delightful resource of science poetry arranged for two voices. Have fun creating your own choral readings with favorite poems, nursery rhymes and even songs.
- Procedure:** Choose a choral reading already prepared or create one with a favorite piece, perhaps even from a piece of writing done by a youngster. It is easiest to start with two groups or voices. Group I and Group II can be identified and the piece marked as such. Next, add Solo I and perhaps Solo II, etc. Keep it simple. Mark the parts and have enough copies for each youngster. Read the piece aloud in your voice. Discuss the group parts and ask for volunteers for the solo pieces. Rehearse, rehearse, and rehearse. Suggest stage directions such as: softly, louder, extra loud, etc.
- Advantages:**
- Fluent Oral Reading:** You will be delighted with the enthusiasm youngsters share for reading aloud with Choral Readings. You will also be surprised at how quickly the pieces are memorized as the youngsters request, "Can we do it again, please?"
- Celebrating Reading and Writing:** Watch the surprise youngsters show when they see one of their own writing pieces has been formatted into a choral reading for all to enjoy. Be sure to give the writer the spotlight!

Reader's Theater

Jacque Wuertenberg

What: Reader's theater is a production youngsters take part in that allows them to bring a story, poem or other writing to life.

Why: Youngsters are provided with scripts, often from familiar read aloud pieces. They are assigned parts, and the staging takes place with students standing with their backs to the audience until they are ready to read their assigned part. At that time, they turn to face the audience and their voice reflects the actions of the character.

What's next:

1. Students practice oral reading as they rehearse for the reader's theater production.
2. Following the performance, provide copies of the original works, additional scripts and other related pieces in different genres for further reading.
3. Invite youngsters to "script writing workshops" so that they can learn to create their own reader's theater scripts.

Procedure:

1. Choose a prepared script or a favorite piece of literature or poetry you have read aloud or familiar to youngsters. Adapt the piece by creating dialogue. Identify the number of characters in the piece and create a speaking part for a narrator. Take out the "he says" and "she says" and have the narrator introduce the characters and set the scenes. There are Web sites such as <http://www.aaronshep.com/rt/> available with prepared scripts and others can be found by doing a Web search with the words "reader's theater."
2. Highlight the character's part on each script. Assign parts and read aloud through the entire script so all of the characters are identified. Rehearse, rehearse, and rehearse by having the cast read the script aloud. Instruct the youngsters in the stylized format of reader's theater.
 - Carry script and walk to the front of the audience.
 - Stand with back to the audience.
 - Narrator turns to face the audience, introduces play and characters.
 - Each character faces the audience when reading (on stage) and then turns with back to the audience when not reading (off stage).
 - Variations: Use music stands to hold scripts, add stools for readers to sit on, place readers at different levels – some sitting, kneeling, standing. Place readers in different parts of the room.

Advantages:

No memorization: Youngsters hold and read scripts during performance.

Minimal, if any, actions, costumes or sets: The action is in the youngster's voice!

Bulletin Boards

Jacque Wuertenberg

- What:** Create meaningful bulletin boards that are student-centered by displaying and featuring the illustrations and writings of youngsters.
- Why:** Youngsters believe time and presence. They know how busy we are, so when our time is given to displaying and featuring pieces of their art and/or writing, youngsters begin to believe someone does care. Thus, when a bulletin board consists of their own work, they know we have given their ideas both time and presence. Someone cares enough about their own work to feature it prominently for others to see. At home, whenever we post a child's work on the refrigerator, the child knows we care.
- What's next:** Give presence to a youngster's work by matting and mounting the art and/or written pieces on background paper. Consider: colored construction paper, wallpaper samples, wrapping paper, collage pieces from magazines. Framing a youngster's work also focuses the viewer's eye on these individual pieces.

Procedure:

1. Create a student-centered bulletin board by inviting youngsters to display an inventory of their favorite interests and experiences. This list will provide an effective and ongoing strategy for writing and illustrating. Feature these pieces on a bulletin board with cutout letters to indicate an appropriate title, such as:
 - Things We Enjoy
 - Places We Like to Visit
 - Our Favorite Pets/Animals/Hobbies/Collections
 - Older People We Love
 - Words We Know ("environmental print" for beginning readers includes words such as: "Stop, Go, McDonalds;" sports words for baseball, basketball enthusiasts.) Feature favorite words on a bulletin board with interesting script and invite youngsters to add to this "Word Wall."
2. Create an attractive layout of these pieces so that viewers will be drawn to the design and content.
3. Consider adding a "Presentation Piece" that brings the viewer up to date on the making of the bulletin board. Indicate how the project came to be, what the youngsters did, and what they learned. Type this in a large font and hang it near the bulletin board.

Advantages:

1. **Posting Indicates Presence:** Youngsters are eager to show others when their work is featured and attractively presented.
2. **Publishing Bulletin Boards:** When the bulletin boards are ready to be taken down, assemble the pieces into a group book to be featured in the library.
3. **Bulletin Board Themes:** Identify themes indicating life lessons. It is much easier to expand a theme as opposed to topics. For example: The theme of cooperation has many possibilities, as opposed to a single topic, such as a particular sport.

Ideas for a brief literacy stop at the library

Keep a notebook on a familiar shelf for patrons (especially young ones) to write each other notes about books. This might work well during summer reading. Or you could have one notebook for each kind of books or series of books to get the baseball fans, the horse lovers, the Nancy Drew buffs, or the Mark Twain Award readers to write to each other.

A creative reading/writing activity a library might implement is letting many people contribute to a sequential story. Teachers usually do this activity by having one person write a paragraph and then pass the paper to another, who writes the next paragraph and so on. You could adapt this idea by posting a long sheet of paper somewhere or designating a spiral notebook for the purpose, inviting various patrons of all ages add to the story. At the conclusion (which you may decide to write when the story is long enough), type it up and let people read the final story. Then start another. This might work especially well for holidays.

If you have bulletin boards in the children's area, devote one board to word activities. For a while you might have a "pair-pear tree" where children can write pairs of homophones they have discovered (sun-son, red-read, etc.) on pear shaped cutouts and add them to a cutout tree trunk. Later you might have an "oddball words" bulletin board and invite children to write words that break the rules on lopsided paper circles and put them on a bulletin board. (Why is d-o-n-e pronounced "dun" when it has a silent e and should rhyme with phone?) Holiday words, vacations words, action words, or letter-of-the-week are other options. Even a bulletin board full of names organized by first letter invites children to consider sound-letter correspondence.

The opportunity to write group letters or cards to authors, local celebrities, or people in the news invites patrons to take a brief writing break.

A large poster or photo to which children may add word labels helps them see how familiar words look in print. They read the labels already on the picture and then decide which ones they want to add.

Word Puzzles

Word puzzles give children a chance to practice reading words and phrases. They may be worksheets kids do during a library activity, individually or in teams. You can make a giant word game on chart paper or a bulletin board and do it as a group, thus teaching kids puzzles and at the same time a group activity. Word puzzles may also be reproduced as take home activities that extend story hour. A variety of them may be available in a literature rack or by the circulation desk. If you make your own, there is no copyright problem, and Web sites such as <http://www.worldvillage.com/wv/gamezone/puzzlegen/>, <http://puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com/>, and <http://www.funbrain.com/detect/> and make creating word puzzles relatively quick and easy. It doesn't take long to build up a file for quick reproduction.

Some ideas for topics:

- Names of characters in the books
- Names of items or places in a book just read or a series older children enjoy
- Titles of series or award winners
- Clues for the puzzle are fill in the blank statements about the plot
- Words related to the topic of a book (mysteries, science, bedtime, plants, etc.) or a Dewey Decimal classification
- Holidays, school, or sports
- Summer activities, winter activities, seasons

Two literacy notes about word puzzles:

When you are working with beginning or struggling readers, it is better to keep the words in word-find puzzles and other word puzzles running from left to right or top to bottom. Young children and children with learning disabilities are still firming up the principle that reading goes left to right or occasionally top to bottom. Encountering words written backwards or upside down confuses the issue.

If children can't read the words they need for word puzzle activities, it is probably best just to tell them the word or give them a partner who can read the words, if a very general clue won't work. There is a time and place for insisting children use whatever skills they have to figure out what words are, but group library activities are not generally the time and place. Library programs are meant to be fun, and frustration and embarrassment aren't fun. Library programs are meant to build good feelings about activities, including reading. It doesn't build good feelings to struggle with a word in front of peers, or be unable to play because no one will tell you what you need to know. There is not generally much helpful context in a word puzzle; this reduces the clues a child might use to decode. Library staff often can't focus on helping a child figure out a word in the midst of a busy activity. This doesn't mean adults never have a child sound out or decipher a word, but during a group activity it is better to just supply the word.

What libraries do for school age literacy in Missouri

A list of library literacy efforts, ideas, activities, and collaborations

Literacy efforts in Missouri's libraries are diverse, and they represent many kinds of service and literacy support. The ideas collected below come from libraries in Missouri, some previously done, others are in process, and still others ideas being developed. They are collected here as a catalogue of ideas that any other library in Missouri might borrow to increase library literacy efforts. The best ideas often come from the trenches!

- Tutoring school kids, either by individual volunteers or through formal homework helpers programs. (Tutoring for kids is more common now than tutoring for adults.)
- Hosting a state representative who read for story time and brought donated Scholastic books to give attendees with him.
- Offer workshops like "Draw Your Own Comic Strip" or "Icky Science for Kids."
- Offer a science project assistance program has been popular where science fairs are popular.
- Host Read Across America events, or a chance to help host a Read Across America event for younger children.
- Some scout groups or club groups earn a reading achievement patch through library.
- Organize reading clubs/book groups after school (some with incentives through or support from local business) for "tweens".
- Provide Spanish classes for kids. (Other languages or topics work, too.)
- Offering summer reading programs of various types, most often available through the Missouri State Library, but others are available.
- Arrange a summer reading sign up group (YMCA camp, for example) as well as for individuals.
- Holding after school programs on a regular schedule, or a allowing a library staff member to accompany children with a reading-related activity on a regular schedule. (Sometimes this is done in collaboration with the school library.)
- Offering winter reading programs. (Use all those past summer reading manuals for ideas.)
- Sponsor writing contests for kids
- Hold team reading events or contests to let struggling readers participate with more fluent readers.

- Allow groups of friends, or other groups (like Brownie troops) to enter reading events or contests together. This mixes struggling and fluent readers and makes the good readers peer group models while it lets slower readers get in on the fun.
- Facilitate and host reading emphasis programs involving athletes from local colleges or even a professional athlete.
- Acquire materials for Accelerated Reader, Reading Recovery, etc., used in the local school. Some headaches may accompany this, but it does get the kids to read and come to the library.
- Make available reading and other educational software on computers.
- Let older kids help with Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) programs for younger ones.
- Meet the needs of home schooling programs and services.
- Offer alternative activities to watching television.
- Stock shelves with books to help hobby groups assist participants with their hobbies.
- Offer computer clubs connecting children with appropriate online learning resources.
- Incorporate math materials/answers/games.

Reproducible Information

Helping Older Children Read

Reading aloud is still a good thing with older children and families.

Books can help you teach your child about your family's culture, values, celebrations, and even challenges. There are children's and young adults' books about all kinds of people, time, situations, and experiences.

There are now picture books for all ages, some with wonderful art in the illustrations and some that look like comic books or have great graphics.

Magazines or appropriate Web sites may be more interesting than books as children get older. Just get them reading!

Reading encourages your children's interests, and their interests can encourage them to read. Reading helps them learn through books, magazines, or even Web sites. It can give them information about their hobbies or interests or even their problems.

Reading builds incidental knowledge, helping with school achievement.

Sometimes children will insist on reading only one kind of book. Time spent reading anything builds skill for later reading interests. Series books, for example, have a predictability that makes them good choices for developing readers. Reading about what interests them helps children get meaning from print and learn other things in the process.

Libraries and other organizations may have programs, such as book clubs, read-ins, or summer reading events that encourage reading.

Too much television seems to interfere with reading and learning skills.

Read for information, for pleasure, for entertainment, for help, for education, to pass the time – but read and read and keep on reading!

Notes for Parents

Summer Reading and Reading Success

Reading researchers agree that children who read for fun become better readers. As children read, even at the beginning level, they get better at it. As they get better at it, they read more and get still better at reading. It seems to work at all reading levels and all ages. People can raise their reading levels by simply spending time reading whatever they can read. So if children are reading over the summer, they are doing more than staying busy and having fun, they are actually learning and becoming better readers.

Studies show children lose part of what they learned during the school year if they don't read and learn over the summer. Children whose summer activities include reading and other learning experiences, however, often actually gain academic skill.

The experience and knowledge children gain from recreational reading helps in other ways. It increases their ability to understand what they read. Vocabulary is a major factor in reading skill. The more words children know, the better they understand what they read. One study found the vocabulary in children's books is richer than the vocabulary of prime time television. So by simply reading, a child is building vocabulary to help him or her be a better reader. Another important part of reading well is background knowledge. When readers already know something about the subject they are reading, they read more successfully. Readers with background knowledge can figure out what the words mean and understand the ideas in what they read. It takes background knowledge to read critically, to respond to an author's message, and to make meaning. Summer reading adds to background knowledge. Readers learn about places, topics, and events they might never experience personally. This is why summer reading may increase general school success as well as reading skill.

The major reading task of the middle grades is gaining fluency. Fluency is the smooth combination of all the things a reader must do so the process of reading the print doesn't interfere with the author's message or the reader's understanding. Perfect reading is not necessary, but a reader must know most of the words almost automatically. Practice is the key to building fluency. Recreational reading is practice.

Children struggling as readers will also benefit from the library's summer reading program. Educators still argue about the best way to overcome reading problems, but the research from every side of the debate agrees that recreational reading helps children become better readers. Recreational reading motivates children to keep on reading. And if they keep on reading, they keep on getting better and better at it!

So summer reading is more than fun. Summer reading raises reading levels and helps children go back to school in the fall ready to succeed and make progress!

Notes for Parents

Reading Problems in the Middle Grades

If a child is still struggling with reading in third grade, it's time to deal with the problem more aggressively than you might have earlier.

Questions to ask: What options does the school offer? What does the teacher think the problem is? Are there other problems? Is your child already getting help? If so, how is the extra help different from the regular classroom? Try to form a team with the reading teacher and work together. Positive relationships between parent and school help.

If the school can't or doesn't provide help, consider a tutor. Before you sink a lot of money into a commercial program, try to find people who used it and see if it succeeded for their child, or try to borrow a copy of the materials. There are many causes for reading problems and many possible answers. Explore them all, but don't assume any one of them will be the final answer for your child just because a commercial promises that it will be.

One of the interesting but frustrating things about reading problems is that some techniques seem to be almost magic for one child, but may not work at all for another.

If you decide to have the child tested, find out as much as you can about what kinds of tests will be used, what they measure, and whether the testing will include work samples and conversations with the teacher and with you. (These last things are important, because the child may not behave the same in the testing situation as in the familiar classroom.) When you get the results, ask a lot of questions about what they mean.

Keep reading to the child. This provides information the child can understand and learn even if he or she can't read it for himself. Pleasant reading aloud helps preserve good feelings about reading, and it allows the child to see mature reading habits. It helps keep interest and learning alive. Books and magazines help teach values, traditions, family heritage, hobbies, skills, and the background knowledge that is part of good reading. Reading together is almost always good family time.

If they have any understanding at all of the reading process, people get to be better readers by reading. Children or teen magazines may be more appealing than books. There is easy reading material on almost every topic, although you may have to search for it. Book clubs or reading programs help some children. Some families even work reading time into the child's allowance system.

There are more and more easy reading level books on everything. Biographies and other nonfiction books at easy reading levels may "hook" some children. They also help with textbook material the child may not be able to read. Try series books related to interests. Simply reading at the appropriate reading level improves reading skill. Recreational reading has actually solved the reading skill problem for some children.

Computers motivate some children to read the screen. There is also computer software to improve reading skills. It is worth checking out and may be part of a total program to help a child. Don't, however, assume computers are an answer by themselves. They don't help some readers, and the lower print quality and distracting images make the screen harder to read for some children.

Books on tape may help, and the school may already have some textbooks on tape. Tracking the text while a tape reads it may also improve reading skill if children are willing to take this time.

Limit television time but do NOT attribute this to the reading problem. Children have a limited amount of time in a day and they need most of it for things like learning, playing, sleeping, and reading more than they need it for television. Some research suggests saturating children with television interferes with their ability to fully process some cognitive tasks, and reading is a task involving processing. Unfortunately, most children like television, and even adults know the challenge of pulling themselves away from it. Sometimes parents may have to be subtle but directive in managing television time.

Try a tutor or homework helper. Parent-child relations are hard enough as the children get older, without mixing in the emotions attached to reading problems. Even if parents are doing the tutoring, balance reading with activities the child enjoys and pleasant interactions. Parents need to be more than enforcers.

If reading feels like punishment, the child will only hate reading, and few people ever get good at things they hate. If having to read or go to tutoring costs the child something that matters to them, the bad feeling transfers to reading. If a reading problem overwhelms the child's whole life, the child often develops other problems, and everybody loses.

Effort does matter, but just trying harder won't solve the problem for most children. "Trying hard" is not the same as knowing what to do. Accusing children of not trying hard enough when they are already discouraged and doing everything they know how to do destroys motivation and adds new layers to the problem. Even if a child really isn't trying, being scolded or punished doesn't usually provide the motivation to change. Negative consequences may (or may not) stop undesired behavior, but they won't usually produce new desired behavior. Generally it takes something pleasurable or rewarding to establish a new behavior. Usually feeling successful or rewarded is what produces effort.

If there are still reading and other academic problems by the middle grades and interventions have not worked, it is now time to consider full-scale testing seriously. By the middle grades testing results will usually be more accurate and there are services and steps that the school cannot offer unless they test the child.

Require reading time, practice, or help, but then let the child go on to something he/she enjoys.
Do NOT let the reading issue overwhelm the child's whole life.

Helping Reluctant Readers And Children With Reading Problems

- Children get to be better and more interested readers by spending time reading. Apparently it's a little like riding a bike – do it and you'll get better at it and enjoy it more. Combine reading with something a child enjoys to get him or her to read.
- Keep on reading aloud to the reluctant reader to keep interest and learning alive.
- If a child finds reading aloud to others burdensome, try reading aloud together so your voice pulls the child along. Try reading alternate pages or paragraphs, or have the child read all the conversation parts for one character while you read the rest. If children have to read aloud at school, reading the school passages together ahead of time when possible may help.
- Word games may help in some stages of learning to read. Since beginning or struggling readers are at a disadvantage in scoring, you can play for a group score (add everyone's score together) and try to beat the group score of the last session instead of playing against each other. You can also play with partners who equal out the skill level.
- Children's or teenager's magazines may be more appealing than books. A subscription to a magazine on a child's favorite topic may spark interest.
- Computers motivate some children to read the screen. A lot of educational computer material is also fun. (Try the library!) Internet sites are often confusing, so you may need to help children learn how to focus on what to look for instead of all the "click here" boxes and advertisements. And of course you will have the child observe the necessary Internet cautions.
- Find easy reading material on the child's interests. There are easy reading level books on almost everything. They are often called high-low books, meaning they are high interest level and low reading level (Try the library again!)
- Biographies and other nonfiction books may "hook" some children who don't like fiction. There are also picture books for older children.
- Try series books related to interests or favorite characters; there are even some book series related to television shows. Sometimes reading a book from which a movie was taken will spark interest (although many of these books may be at higher reading levels). There is a predictability to series books that helps "carry" a struggling reader.
- Limit television time but do NOT blame this on the lack of reading interest.
- Try books on tape or CD. Reading along with the audio book sometimes even improves skill. Audio books are especially good for trips and can keep the child company during other activities. Even if a child won't read along, hearing books helps develop

comprehension skills that are sometimes delayed if a child struggles with print. Audio books also remind children there is interesting or entertaining material in books and build general knowledge that helps with school.

- Having an older child read aloud to younger children is good practice and good fun. Often books for younger children are at easier reading levels an older child can read with ease.
- Sometimes parents can get a child to read regularly by including reading in the child's chore structure or allowance system. Sometimes you can give a child a choice of activities that make reading the most attractive one. For example, "Do you want to wash these dishes while I read to your sister or read to your sister while I do the dishes?" "Your chore for tonight is either cleaning the bathroom or half an hour of reading."
- Social activities attract many children. Summer reading, teen reading groups at the library, or events like read-a-thons may attract even a reluctant reader. They may even discover an author or type of book they enjoy and continue reading.
- Reading and writing are two ends of the same process. Encourage sending letters to friends or family, e-mail correspondences with family or friends (NOT chat rooms or e-mail to strangers), appropriate pen pals, journals, or memory books. Making their own books can help children develop writing skills and therefore reading skills. Often for these "process" activities it is better to accept imperfect spelling and grammar, but sometimes writing to be shared offers an opportunity to help with spelling correction, standard grammar, and neatness. Editing offers a chance to standardize a manuscript after the creative process is done.
- Some reluctant readers simply have other more active things on their minds. They can read, but they don't want to. Others are experiencing real problems with the reading process. It can be hard to tell the difference. Try to figure out which situation you are dealing with.
- If a child can read at grade level but just doesn't enjoy the reading, keep on exposing the child to interesting reading material (see all the tips above) but try to keep the situation low key. Kids don't usually learn to enjoy something they feel hassled about. As they get older, they try to prove "you can't make me" if adults push too hard. You really can't make a child read; you can sometimes make a child sit with a book in front of his face for twenty minutes, but you can't make a child read. Try to get children interested instead.
- If a struggling reader is not getting enough help at school by second or third grade, it is time to intervene. There are many different ways of practicing reading and different approaches to tutoring. Try several approaches and talk to the school about what is being done there.
- We tell children who are having reading problems to try harder, but often what they need is to try something different. It is true some children just won't make the effort, but in

most cases children with reading problems don't know what to do in the first place so they can't "try harder" unless they know what to try.

- Be very careful about any one program or approach that promises to be THE ANSWER for all reading problems. A particular program might be very helpful to your child, but it also might not be. One of the curious things about reading problems is that different things seem to work for different readers. Therefore, it's fine and helpful to check out programs you read about or hear about, but don't assume any one program will be the magic answer for your particular child just because it claims to be, especially if it comes with a hefty price tag.
- Good reading skill is increasingly important. There can be a lot of pressure on a child who is not a good reader. The child should get help and practice reading, but the child also needs other activities to get a break from the pressure. Pressure and panic do not seem to help the learning process. If reading feels like punishment or loss, the problem will grow worse.
- If there is a diagnosed, ongoing learning disability or reading problem, try a tutor or homework helper. Sometimes when parents tutor it is very hard on family relations. Each family is different, but children need good relationships with their parents more than they need free tutors.
- Some children have long term difficulties with reading even if they try hard. There really are learning disabilities and some perfectly intelligent children have them. Do not allow a reading problem to overwhelm the child's entire life. A child often develops other problems if the reading problem causes too many other bad things. Reading does not improve just because the negative consequences of not being able to read increase. Learning proceeds best when people of all ages have some experiences of success, security, and happiness.

If you think you might be dealing with learning disabilities

Learning disabilities, learning disability, and learning disabled are all abbreviated “LD.” People in different fields don’t always mean the same thing when they say “learning disabilities.” Even people whose specialty is learning disabilities do not agree about exactly what a learning disability is or exactly what to do about it. Ask questions about what the people dealing with your child mean when they say “LD.” Being considered learning disabled in one setting may not mean the same thing as testing learning disabled in another. This can be an important point when you ask for accommodations.

Don’t automatically buy a blanket statement like “the answer is phonics” or “something’s wrong with his vision.” It is true that very systematic phonics instruction helps many children classified as learning disabled, but not all of them. Children whose difficulty is a poor sense of language sounds may not be able to use phonics very well unless they have specific training in the sound system of the language. It is true that some vision problems cause reading difficulties, but this does not mean that all people who test “learning disabled” have vision problems. At present, there is no one answer for all learning disabilities or all students. Learning disabilities are a group of problems that result in the same situation: a person has trouble learning in the usual academic ways even when their intelligence is normal. When you hear about materials or techniques, explore them, but do not consider any one method the total answer just because it claims to be.

Be careful where you get your information. There have been a lot of ideas about LD disproved by more research and follow-up on LD individuals. For example, researchers once thought more boys than girls were learning disabled, but now evidence suggests more boys are being identified but there are as many girls who actually have learning disabilities. People once thought learning disabilities were all visual perceptual problems; now there are recognized learning disabilities involving many processes. We used to hear that children outgrow learning disabilities; researchers now say true LD conditions are lifelong, but as people learn to cope with them, the signs are no longer obvious or the problems they cause decrease.

Although effort matters, an LD child needs to do more than “try harder.” There are problems that “trying harder” will not solve. Generally, a person with learning disabilities needs to try something different. The basis of LD instruction is trying different approaches until the right match between individual and teaching technique is found. Once a helpful technique is found, then effort can begin to produce progress.

In most cases, students who have reading and writing problems need to hang on and get a traditional high school diploma. The main alternative to a high school diploma is the GED, and the GED is exclusively a reading/writing/math test that will probably be quite difficult for a person with reading or math disabilities. Also, traditional high school curriculum offers some choices in course work, which the GED does not. It is possible to get accommodations in taking the GED test, but the other tests required to “prove” the disability are more exacting and stringent than those used in most public schools.

Four Strategies & Eighteen Ideas

**to motivate youngsters to be excited about literacy
at home and at the library**

By Jacque Wuertenberg

Children need to see, hear, and feel that family at home and friends at the library are saying and doing the same things regarding literacy. When this happens, youngsters begin to also believe literacy is important! Here are four specific strategies with 18 ideas family members and friends at the library may use to provide a community of support for readers and writers. The success of these four strategies depends on mutual understanding and cooperation between family members and friends of literacy.

- 1. Read Aloud Everyday.**
- 2. Write Everyday.**
- 3. Take Note of What Youngsters Say and Do.**
- 4. Periodically Post, Produce, and Publish.**

1. Read aloud to youngsters.

Read these things aloud:

- Favorite picture books. Rhythm, rhyme, and repetition assist with comprehension.
- Poems, riddles, nursery rhymes – try echo reading (you say it, the child repeats it) and choral reading (you and the child say it together).
- Songs. Sing favorite songs together. Write out the words to the song, one line on a page, add illustrations, and create your own homemade songbook.
- Chapter books. Your understanding of the book comes through in your voice and assists in comprehension.
- Books about a youngster's interest. Look for a variety of genre within a topic. For example: horse lovers can read poetry of horses, biographies of horse trainers, how-to books on caring for horses, as well as fiction. Check out the reference book in the library called *From A to Zoo* for titles of books by topics.
- Letters and notes received. Say, "Listen to this!"
- Books on your own interest (gardening, fishing, sports, animals, etc.). Occasionally read aloud a passage you like. Start by saying, "Listen to this!" Youngsters need to see the adults who are important to them reading too. Often, when youngsters hear someone reading aloud, they also hear the love of reading as it comes through in that person's voice.
- Read aloud the youngster's writing. Again, say, "Listen to this!" Children know we read aloud from our favorite authors and when they hear us read aloud from their own writing, they begin to know what they write is important to us too.

2. Write everyday.

Each day try to find time to write and share your writing with youngsters. Try these ideas to encourage writing:

- Talk about yourself as a writer. Use the word “writing” as often as you can. Say, “I am writing this letter. I am writing this grocery list.” When you overhear your youngster saying something, say, “I like the way you said that. Please say it again so I can write it down and remember it.”
- Talk about youngsters as writers. When you see a child writing say, “I can see that you are writing!”
- Become a scribe for youngsters and write down exactly what is said, word for word. Read it back to the youngster by saying, “Here is what you just wrote.” The scribe serves to record the ideas and the scribe’s job is to transcribe – get the ideas down as quickly as possible.
- Write notes to youngsters. Ask questions to encourage youngsters to write back to you.
- Respond to writing by reading for content. Take the child’s piece of writing with two hands to remind you to acknowledge the importance of the writer’s ideas.
- When you read a child’s piece, emphasize content rather than focusing on errors. (Copyediting is only necessary when a writing piece is being prepared for publication or going public. Respond first to content to assure the writer knows he or she has been heard.)
- Respond to a piece of writing in the following order:
 1. Mirroring - I read that your dog’s name is Rusty.
 2. Questioning -What are some things Rusty likes to do?
 3. Connecting - I have a Basenji dog that climbs trees and doesn’t bark. (Connect only after mirroring and questioning since connecting takes the emphasis away from the writer.)

3. Take note of what youngsters say & do.

- Listen attentively to youngsters by looking at them when they are talking.
- Identify something the youngster just said. Say, “That was well said! Tell me again what you just said so that I can write it down.”
- Listen and write down what the youngster has just said and then read it back by saying, “Here’s what you said!”
- Next, post it on the refrigerator door, or place it in a 3” x 5” or 4” x 6” stand-up acrylic frame and feature it on a specially marked bookshelf in the library.

Youngsters begin to believe they have something to say when their language is given time and presence. Children will think to themselves, “Well, if you like what I just said, wait until you hear this.” Watch for a time when you’re not around and the youngster writes down another idea for you to read. When this happens, congratulate yourself on the child’s achievement of a literacy milestone.

4. Periodically Post, Produce, Publish

Post. Feature writing by placing it in special places:

- Place writing and art anywhere it is accessible for others to read.
- Matte and mount pieces to add quality and presence.
- Purchase three ring binders with clear plastic sleeves to keep pieces of writing together.
- Help youngster get into the habit of dating writing pieces, as well as signing each piece.

Produce. Showcase important pieces by bringing language to life. Here are some ways to accomplish this:

- Add background music as writing is being read.
- Create a reader's theatre script by adapting the piece of writing. Omit the "he said" and "she said," add a narrator's part, and assign parts for each of the other characters. The readers stand with their backs to the audience until they are "on stage," at which time they turn and face the audience and read their part.
- Create a choral reading by assigning group or solo parts to the youngster's piece.
- Put on a puppet show based on the youngster's writing piece.
- Rewrite a favorite song to the piece of writing. (The song, "Oh My Darling Clementine" works well.)

Publish. Bind pages together:

- Add an "About the Author" page and a "Readers' Comments" page.
- Among many other things, you will have created a book for others to read as well as a family heirloom. Perhaps the library may feature "Our Own Young Authors" section.

How to use the ideas from “You Can Be an Author”

The thirteen pages in the following booklet contain over 35 ideas arranged in two columns. Start with the left-hand column and read from left to right to move from ideas and instructions to the examples. The ideas and examples can also be mixed and matched. All are illustrating, writing, and publishing ideas youngsters can immediately put into action.

These pages will spark ideas to help youngsters become actively involved in language production – an important part of the literacy process. Suggested supplies are available in most grocery, hardware, or feed stores in your area. An index with page reference assists you in locating special interests, techniques, and strategies. You can also use individual pages as handouts to introduce ideas a few at a time, or in a series of group experiences.

These ideas are presented by Jacque Wuertenberg. Please feel free to contact her with comments and questions. Jacque is also interested in any specific examples you can provide her and can be reached at:

Jacque Wuertenberg
1068 Apricot Drive
St. Charles, MO 63301
Telephone: (636) 916-3234
jnwuertenberg@yahoo.com

You Can Be an Author

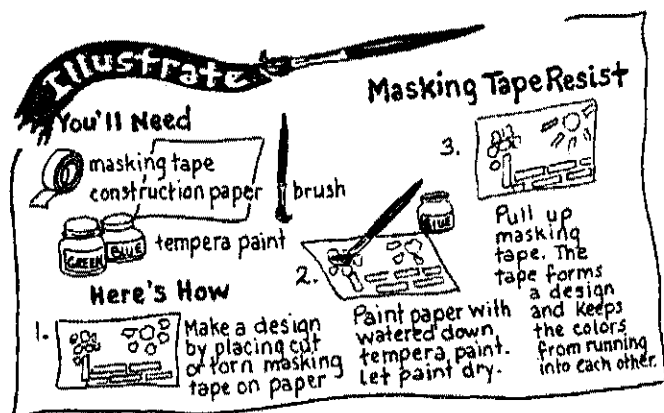
**Ideas for young authors
and their friends**

By Jacque Wuertenberg

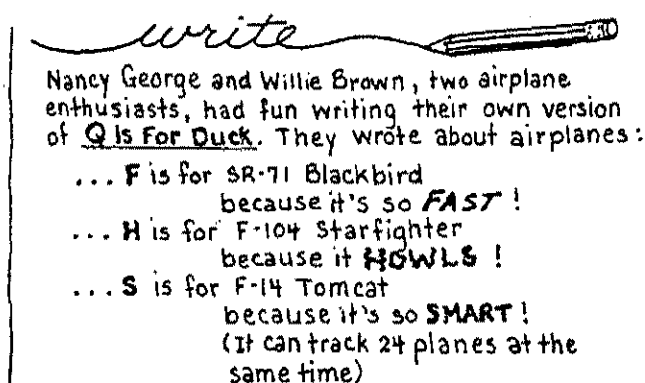
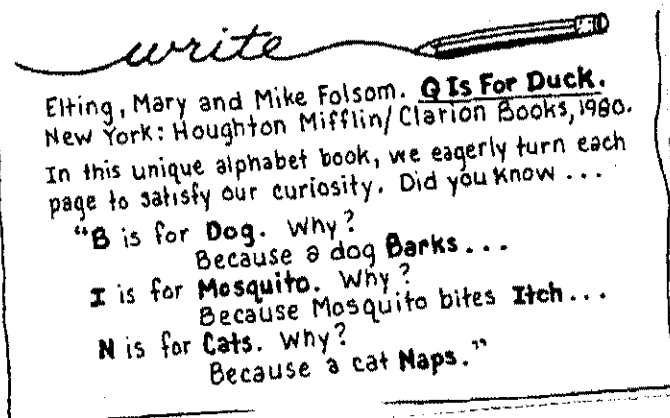
Masking Tape Resist Art
 "Q is for Duck"
 Laminating for Durability

You can be an author!

Here are the Things
 You Need:



Here are the Things
 That Can Happen:

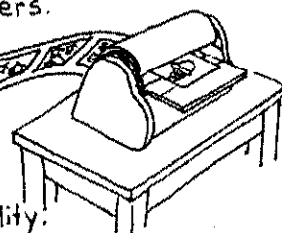


A roll laminator will assist you in making a long hanging mural out of individual papers. Insert the pages to be laminated with about $\frac{1}{2}$ " space between sheets. Do not cut the pages apart. Put a brad at the top for hanging.



Laminating is available at most media production centers.

The plastic coating gives your work a professional quality.



Sketching Ideas
People I Know...
File Cards and Publishing

You can be an author!

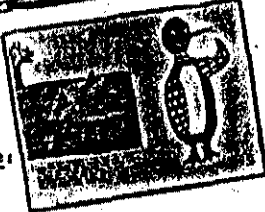
Here are the Things You Need:

Illustrate

You can draw about
your ideas!

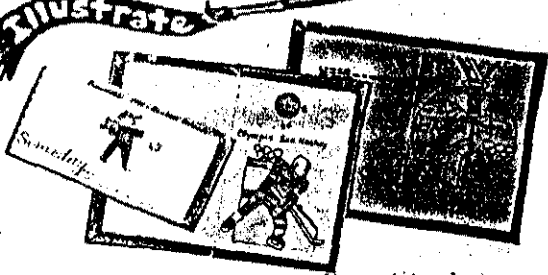
Supplies needed include:

colored pencils		
water colors		
magic markers	chalk	pencils
paint	crayons	charcoal



Here are the Things That Can Happen:

Illustrate




Sketches from student-authored books

write

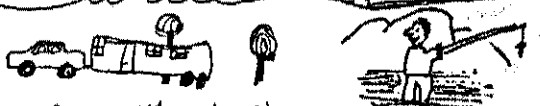
You can write about the special people in your life. Grandparents, and favorite aunts and uncles often rate as the chosen celebrities.

Mrs. Nolte's fourth grade class in Wilton, Iowa wrote the class book, Older People We Love. Kris Flake's page reads:

My grandpa is very wise, caring, understanding and loving. He takes time to listen. He is especially special to me because of the way he smiles at me.



write



Sean Rittle, a 3rd grader at Coverdale Elementary School in St. Charles, Missouri wrote:


A Special Man

"My grandpa is Thomas Samuel Cooper... He has many hobbies. He likes to fish... He also likes to go camping..."

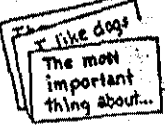
Publish

File cards come in different colors and sizes, and can also be laminated and bound with a comb binder as well as rings, staples and yarn.

Publish



File Cards



1. Write a story on 3x5 or 4x6 cards.
2. Bind with rings, staples, or yarn.


Vegetable Printing Art

"I Never Saw..."

Staples and Tape for Binding Books

You can be an author!


Here are the Things You Need:

Illustrate 

You'll Need

- assorted vegetables
- pepper
- squash
- beet
- potato*
- paper
- paint or ink

Vegetable Prints




Here's How


1. Cut vegetable into various sizes
2. Dip pieces into paint or ink.
3. Print on paper.

*potato may be carved into a variety of shapes!


Here are the Things That Can Happen:

Illustrate 

A page from
a class book illustrated
by grade 8 students in Ontario, Canada




Grass, trees, people, and hearts
go together.

write 

Judson, Jerome. **I Never Saw....** Chicago:
Albert Whitman and Company, 1975.

Vivid artwork sets a fascinating
dream-like tone for Judson's
verse describing images he's
never seen.

I've watched the clouds
for hours and hours
lying still upon my back
but never saw an eagle pass
with wings so wide and black.




write 


Todd and Erick Morr from
Colorado Springs, Colorado
used Jerome Judson's
I Never Saw as a
starter for their poem
about space. They wrote:

"I've never seen a spaceship
Doing a flip
While finding its way
Through the Milky Way!"





Publish 

Staples and Tape

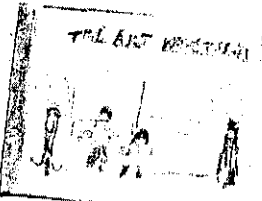


1. Staple book together.
2. Use masking tape
or colored mystic
tape to cover staples.



Publish 

A book called
The Art Museum



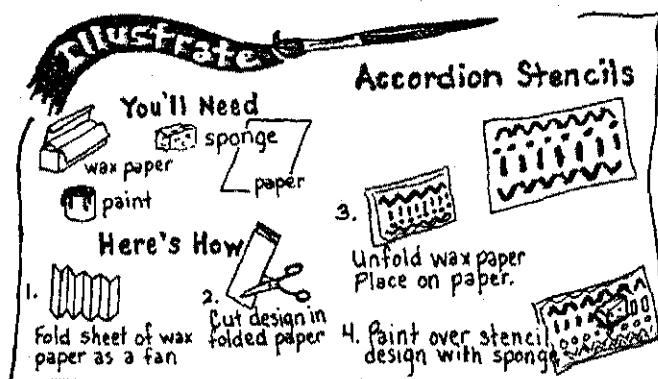
Stapled and bound
with colored
mystic tape

mystic tape →

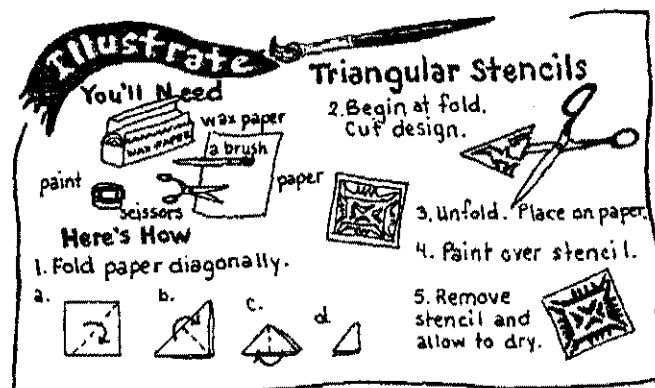
written by Sarah and Zachary Frankel

You can be an author!

Here are the Things You Need:



Here are the Things That Can Happen:



write

Burningham, John. Would you Rather...
New York: T.Y. Crowell, 1978.

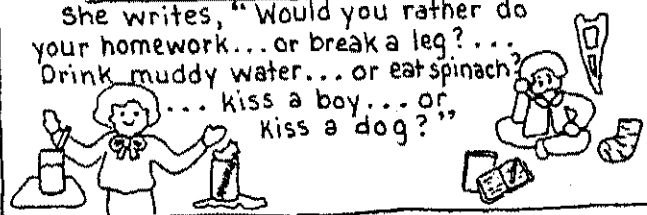
A book of questions giving two choices,
both of which are often difficult.
Would you rather... or Would you rather?

You'll love the illustrations!

write

Jean Drysdale from Wedgewood School
in Florissant, Missouri made up her
own list of choices. You'd enjoy her version
of Would You Rather...?

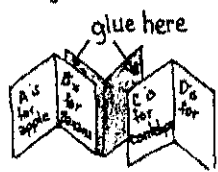
She writes, "Would you rather do
your homework... or break a leg?...
Drink muddy water... or eat spinach?
... Kiss a boy... or
Kiss a dog?"



Publish Accordion Books

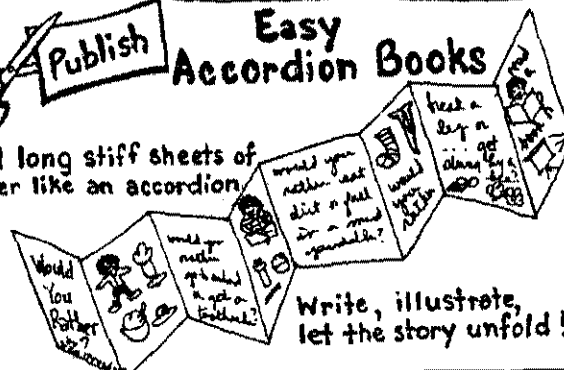
1. Fold several uniform sized sheets of paper in half.*
2. Glue the backs of the sheets together.

* Several different colored
sheets of construction
paper make a colorful
and sturdy background!



Publish Easy Accordion Books

Fold long stiff sheets of
paper like an accordion.



Write, illustrate,
let the story unfold!

Stand outs/Pop up ideas
Bumper Stickers as Writing Ideas
Stitchery and Making Books

You can be an author!

Here are the Things You Need:

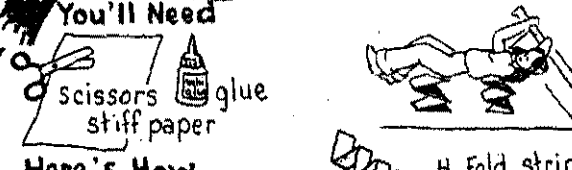
Illustrate **Stand Outs**

You'll Need

scissors glue
stiff paper

Here's How

1. Glue "stand out" object to stiff paper.
2. Cut it out.
3. Cut 3 or 4 strips of paper 2 1/4 inches by 1/4 inch.
4. Fold strips accordion style.
5. Glue strips to stand out and to background.



Here are the Things That Can Happen:

Illustrate **Stand Outs**

You'll Need

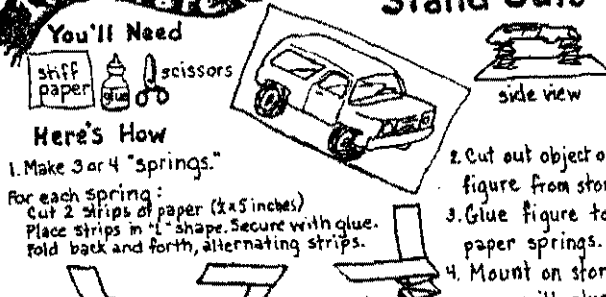
stiff paper glue scissors

Here's How

1. Make 3 or 4 "springs."

For each spring:
Cut 2 strips of paper (2x5 inches)
Place strips in "L" shape. Secure with glue.
Fold back and forth, alternating strips.

2. Cut out object or figure from story.
3. Glue figure to paper springs.
4. Mount on story page with glue.




write

Merrill, Jean and Frances Gruse Scott.
The Bumper Sticker Book, Chicago, Albert Whitman and Company, 1973.

Here's a book to which we can all relate and add our own ideas -

"I see a Skylark
With a bumper sticker on it,
And the bumper sticker says -
Land a Lady on the Moon . . .
. . . And on the brand new Vega
The Bumper sticker says -
Support your local bumper sticker store."



write

Use the Bumper Sticker pattern lots of ways!

Make your own book of Bumper Stickers:

CB Bumper Stickers . . .

Friendly Bumper Stickers . . .

or write The ABC's of Bumper Stickers!

Begin a "What If" book:

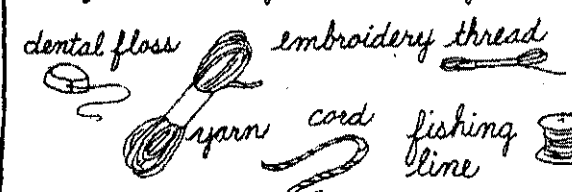
"If buildings (or people or animals) had bumper stickers . . .!"

Design your own T-shirt, buttons, or sweatshirt. What messages would they give?

Publish

Have fun with materials that work well for stitching books. Try:

dental floss embroidery thread
yarn cord fishing line

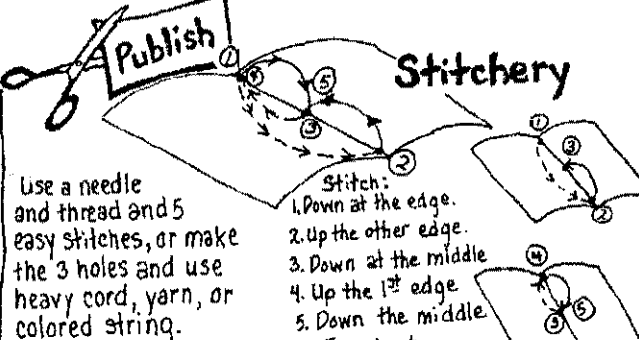


Publish **Stitchery**

Use a needle and thread and 5 easy stitches, or make the 3 holes and use heavy cord, yarn, or colored string.


Stitch:

1. Down at the edge.
2. Up the other edge.
3. Down at the middle.
4. Up the 1st edge.
5. Down the middle.
6. Tie a knot.



You can be an author!

Here are the Things You Need:

Illustrate 

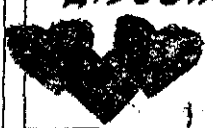
You'll Need
a knife
paper
gum erasers
paint

Eraser Printing

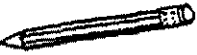
Here's How
1. Use erasers "as is," or cut into shapes or designs.
2. Dip into paint (or ink)
3. Print on a sheet of paper.

Here are the Things That Can Happen:

Illustrate 

LISTEN ~
 **with your heart.**

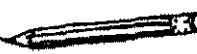
From Lynn Hallquist Anchorage, Alaska

write 

shapes

YOU CAN MAKE WORDS GO AROUND AN OUTLINE.
YOU CAN FILL A SHAPE WITH WORDS.

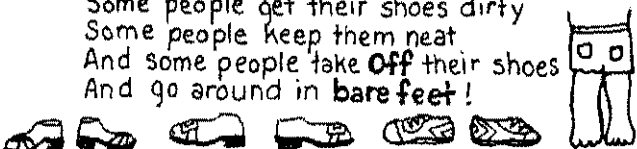
It's fun to
illustrate your page
in the shape of your idea.


write 

You Can Make Up Your Own Ideas


Matt McCarthy, a student at Mark Twain Elementary School in Florissant, Missouri wrote: **THE SHOE BOOK**

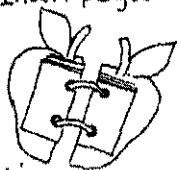
Some people get their shoes dirty
Some people keep them neat
And some people take **off** their shoes
And go around in **bare feet**!




Publish 

Shape Covers

1. Choose an object relevant to the story



2. Cut its shape out of construction paper, leaving one straight edge.


3. Insert pages!

Publish 

Shape Books

1. Cut the cover and the pages in the shape of an object from the story.
Be sure to leave a straight edge for binding!

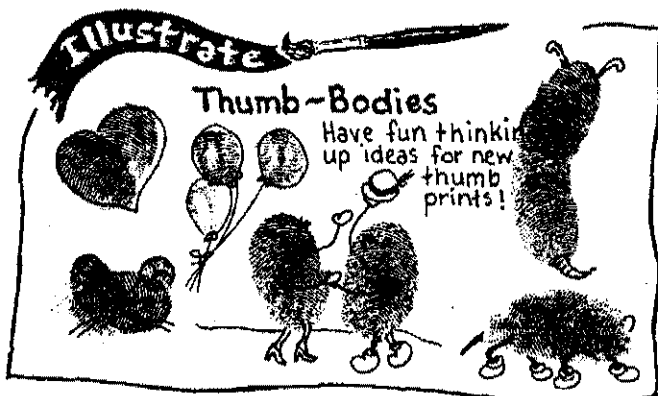
2. Illustrate and rewrite the story on the shape pages.


3. Fill in the details on the cover.

4. Bind it!

You can be an author!

Here are the Things You Need:



Here are the Things That Can Happen:



write

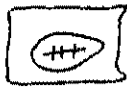
Glenn Baumgarth, a 5th grader at Robinwood School in Florissant, Missouri, created his own writing pattern. He wrote:

Fingerprints of Different Sport Players

These are the fingerprints of...



Minnesota Fats



Pat Tilly



Pelé



Dr. "J"

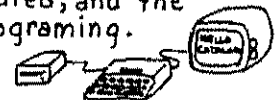
write

You can write about what you know and care about!

Dean Davis, a 6th grader at Lake Highland Elementary School in Dallas, Texas wrote

What is a Computer?

Complete with a glossary, this book on computers explains the three main parts of a computer's memory, how it is used and measured, and the language used in programming.



Publish

Chicken Rings *

* And turkey bands and hog rings

Chicken rings, turkey bands, and hog rings are available at local feed stores. They make excellent inexpensive binders.



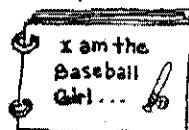
chicken rings



turkey bands



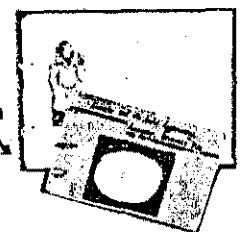
hog rings



Publish

chicken rings

Chicken rings come in different colors, are easy to assemble and provide an easy way to bind books.



You can be an author!

Here are the Things You Need:

Illustrate

You'll Need

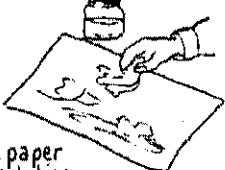
- tissue paper (or crepe paper)
- white glue
- paper container for water

Here's How

1. Mix solution of $\frac{1}{2}$ water $\frac{1}{2}$ glue
2. Dip tissue paper into glue solution. Use as a brush. Glue solution will release color from the tissue paper.

Pieces of tissue paper may be left on the picture to add texture.

Tissue Paper Painting



Here are the Things That Can Happen:

Illustrate

A cloth bound book illustrated with tissue paper




write

Christi Garber, a gymnast and a 5th grader in Mrs. Foster's class at Chavez Elementary School in Albuquerque, New Mexico, wrote:

The ABC's of Gymnastics

"A is for apparatus
Apparatus is the equipment the gymnast uses to work on, so she can do well and maybe go to the olympics."




write

ABC books can be written on any subject and can be adapted to various skill levels.

The ABC's of Horses can demonstrate considerable knowledge of horses:

"A is for Appaloosa"
or it can convey a deep love of horses:
"A is for Always. I will always love horses!" from Martha Bond

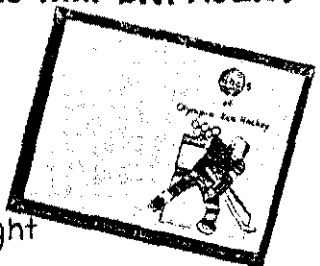


Publish

A cloth covered book made with DRY MOUNT

titled
The ABC's of Olympic Ice Hockey

by
Scott Wheelwright



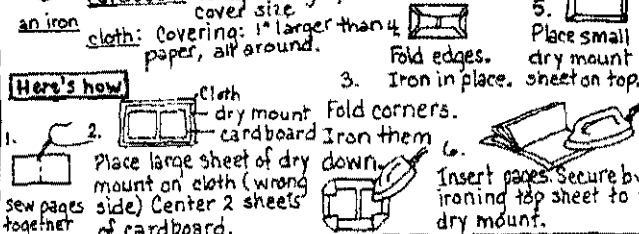
Publish

You'll need

- dry mount:
- 1 sheet = paper size; 1 sheet = cloth cover size. (available through photographic supply stores)
- paper: several sheets for pages - double the page size.
- cardboard: 2 light weight pieces: cover size
- an iron
- cloth: Covering: 1" larger than 4" square, all around.

Here's how

1. Sew pages together
2. Place large sheet of dry mount on cloth (wrong side) Center 2 sheets of cardboard.
3. Iron in place. sheet on top.
4. Fold corners. Iron them down.
5. Place small dry mount
6. Insert pages. Secure by ironing top sheet to dry mount.



Collage ideas

I am...

Different Book Covers

You can be an author!

Here are the Things You Need:

Illustrate

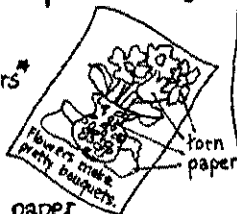
Torn Paper Collage

You'll need
construction paper in assorted colors*
glue
paper

Here's How

Tear shapes out of construction paper
Glue them down to form figures and/or objects.

*wallpaper and wrapping paper provide texture and variety.



Here are the Things That Can Happen:

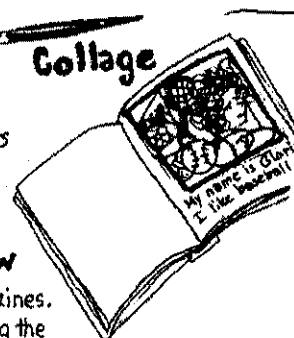
Illustrate

Collage

paper
scissors
glue
old magazines

Here's How

1. Cut several pictures from magazines.
2. Glue them down, overlapping the edges so that little or no paper shows through.



write

Adoff, Arnold. I Am The Running Girl.
New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1979.

The running girl says,
"poppa plays tennis
and my sisters swim
and jog and walk
but

i am the running girl
in the family"

Even nonrunners will "feel" the experience
of running in these vivid poems.



write

Change the pattern of I am the Running Girl
to write about yourself, a special friend,
or even a pet.

Do you know -

- ... a football boy?
- ... a writing girl?
- ... a championship dog?
- ... a 4-wheel drive kid?
- ... or a CBer?



Publish

Contact Covers

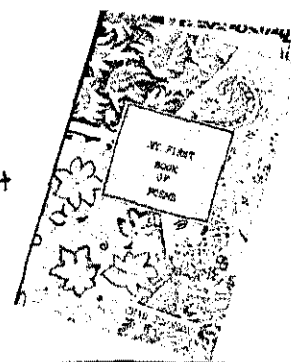
You may cover a hand-decorated
cover with clear contact paper to
better preserve it; or use patterned
contact paper for a colorful cover!

1. Cover light weight card board with contact paper.
2. Insert pages.
3. Bind with rings or a comb binding.



Publish

The different
designs of contact
paper provide
interesting
book covers.



Crayon Resist Art

My Name is ...

Comb Bindings for Books

You can be an author!

Here are the Things You Need:

Illustrate

You'll Need

- brush
- paint construction paper
- crayons

Crayon Resist

* works especially well for snow scenes.

Here's How


1. Draw a picture. Color it brightly (press firmly)
2. Paint over the crayon with white paint.
3. The crayon will "resist" the paint, causing a snowflake effect.

Here are the Things That Can Happen:

Illustrate

After a snow storm in Livonia, Michigan, students wrote a book called


A Snowy Day



illustrated with crayon resist

write

Write about who you are!



CHRIS

Start with your name and tell the whole story: How your name came to be ... who gave it to you

write

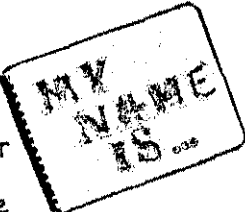
Shelly Osborne at Longfellow School in Alameda, California produced a class book called **My Name Is...** that reflects the multicultural composition of her second grade class. Each page has a self portrait with an explanation of his or her given name.

"My name is Desi. My mom and dad named me. My name means 'desired one.'"

Shelly added her own page, explaining how her aunt suggested naming her Sheldeen, after her father, Sheldon.

Publish


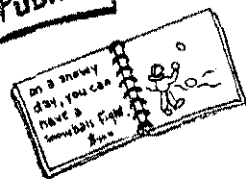
Children are impressed when you bring in a bestseller and it's their book and it doesn't fall apart the first time it's read.



Plastic comb binders are attractive and durable.

Publish

Comb Binding

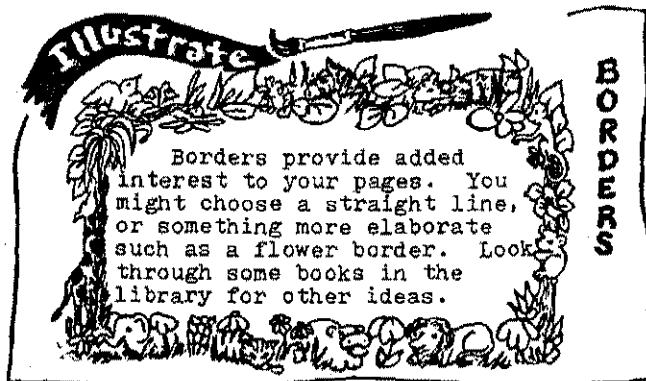


Comb binders are inexpensive and are available at most material production centers. They give a professional look to any book.

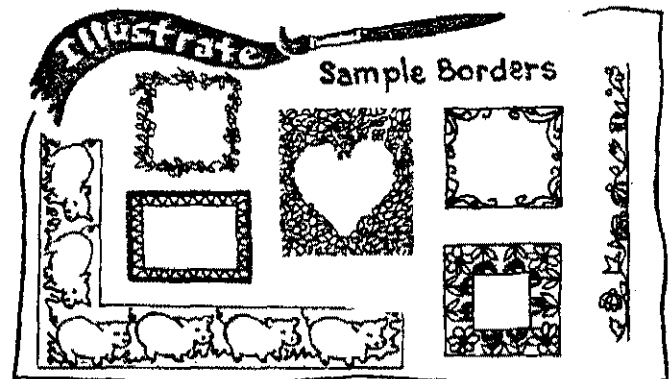
Borders on pages
Counting ideas
End Papers

You can be an author!

Here are the Things You Need:



Here are the Things That Can Happen:

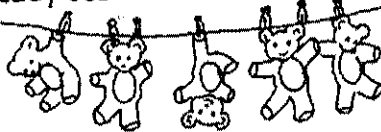


write
Gretz, Susanna. Teddy Bears 1 to 10. Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1969.

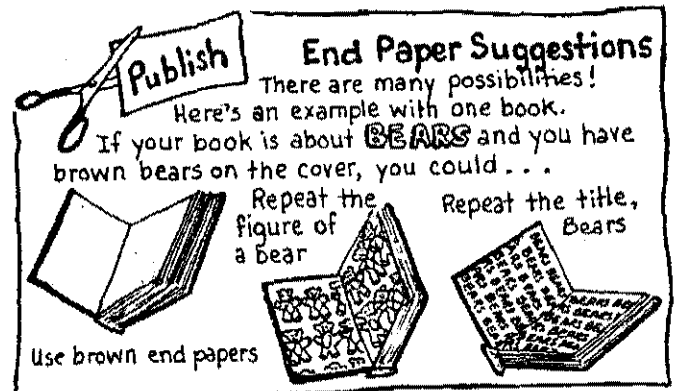
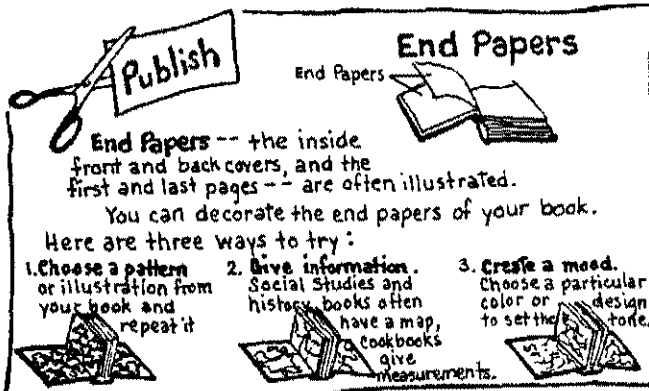
This delightful book amuses us with its colorful simplicity: "3 dirty old teddy bears

4 teddy bears in the wash

5 teddy bears on the clothesline..."



write
You can write about what you know about! Mark Paiste wrote I Like Turtles and his classmates said that he really does. Mark says, "I like box turtles
I like map turtles
I like snapping turtles... painted turtles and sea turtles. I just like turtles." Matthew Lakofsky, a fifth grader in Pennsylvania wrote: I Like Basketball
I like passing... dribbling... shooting... winning... the sound of the crowd cheering.



Background Paper Art

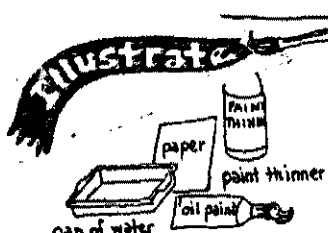
"Some Things You Should Know About..."

Unique Publications

You can be an author!

Here are the Things You Need:

Illustrate **Marbled Paper**



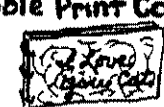
1. Thin the oil paint.
2. Place drops of oil paint in the water.
3. Stir

4. Lay paper on the water.
5. Remove paper and allow it to dry.
6. Bind into a book.

a cover that looks like **MARBLE**

Here are the Things That Can Happen:

Illustrate **Bubble Print Cover**



You'll Need
a straw, a bowl, liquid detergent or shampoo, paint or food coloring, the binding of your choice

Here's How

1. Add several drops of detergent or shampoo to water.
2. Add a few drops of food coloring or paint. Stir.
3. Blow into straw, causing bubbles to rise above the bowl.
4. Touch paper to bubbles. Bubbles will "pop," creating a marble effect.
5. Bind into a book!

write

Batherman, Muriel. **Some Things You Should Know About My Dog.** Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1976.

"When people ask, 'What kind of dog is that?' I tell them, 'He's an extraordinary dog!'"

Batherman gives details and examples:

"He always follows me; He is faithful. He isn't afraid of the dark; he is courageous..."

write

A group of youngsters in Hazelwood, Missouri had fun writing:

Some Things You Should Know About Our School

They wrote:

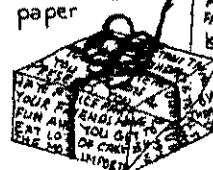
"We like our school.

When people say, 'Tell us about your school,' we say, 'Our school is great. Our teacher takes us on fieldtrips; she is adventurous. Our custodian got our ball off the roof; he is helpful.'"




Publish **Unique Publications**

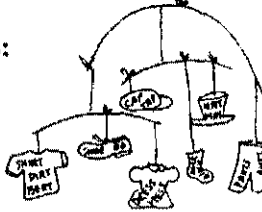
Make your own:



wrapping paper

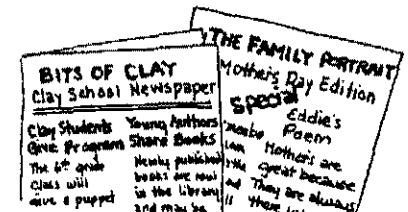


greeting cards



mobiles and murals.

Publish **Newspaper**



* Try a special Mother's Day edition.

Photograph and Art

Caption Ideas

Peel Off Labels and Publishing

You can be an author!

Here are the Things You Need:

Illustrate



Photographs provide a catalyst for writing. Arrange your favorite pictures in a photo album, add captions and you'll have a BEST SELLER!

Here are the Things That Can Happen:

Illustrate

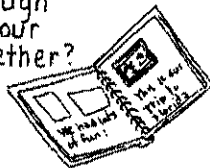
Photographs



write

In the same way that George Mendoza added captions to Norman Rockwell's paintings, youngsters can add captions to other paintings, to cartoons, to magazine pictures . . . or . . .

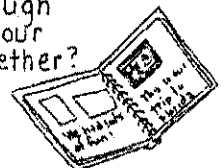
How about going through the photograph album of your last trip or family get-together?



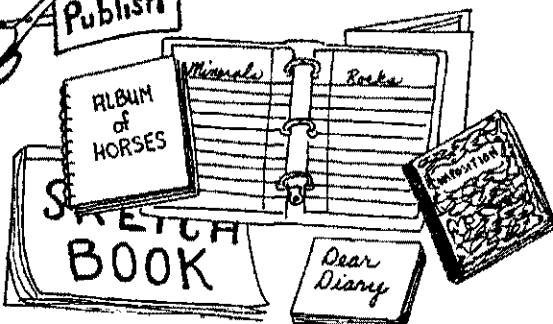
write

In the same way that George Mendoza added captions to Norman Rockwell's paintings, youngsters can add captions to other paintings, to cartoons, to magazine pictures . . . or . . .

How about going through the photograph album of your last trip or family get-together?



Publish



Publish

Peel Off Labels

White or colored peel off labels may be purchased at stationery stores. They are inexpensive and easy to use.

Labels come in various sizes and shapes. Choose the size that best fits your story. You may want to use one size for the pictures and another size for the story. Mount and bind.



You Can Be an Author

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Section Five

Creating Lifelong Readers: Serving Young Adults with Literacy in Mind

Literacy Notes for Libraries Serving Young Adults

Patrick Jones, writing in *New Directions for Library Service to Young Adults*, points out that "...the literacy needs of young adults do not receive much attention. While everyone recognizes how important it is for children to learn to read by grade three, there is a tendency to forget the reading development is a continuum, and the result is that emphasis on literacy decreases after elementary school" (Jones 30). Attempts to measure literacy in middle schools and high schools bear this out. A 1992 study measuring literacy skill in 31 countries found that in the United States, 9-year-olds were second in reading achievement, while 14-year-olds ranked ninth. In Missouri, the yearly statewide assessment scores usually show that in the same school, fewer seventh graders than third graders score in the advanced and proficient ranges. Scores usually drop again for 11th graders.

Some teens are skilled and avid readers, a fact we must remember. In an ideal literacy world, teen readers would all be fluent in managing print. The teen years would be a time when they would grow in their ability to handle different kinds of text while using the written word to expand their knowledge and experience. And for some teens it does work that way. Teens who are voracious readers are active if sometimes demanding library patrons, appearing often, conversing with us about many things, taxing our collections because they want more, or perplexing us because they want something else.

But the ideal literacy world is not universal. Some young people reach the teen years still struggling with print, never having broken the code. There are also teens who have mastered the print process but never move on to become real readers. They do the essential literacy tasks, but their grasp of the many facets of text and their engagement with the meanings conveyed by the text don't develop. They seldom make real meaning in response to what they read. Since these teens don't read, they have less practice, less background knowledge (a crucial factor in understanding what they read), even less interest, and, over time, develop less skill than readers who were progressing in literacy skill while their non-reading counterparts were standing still. Schools often say these students have "poor comprehension" and they account in part for the fact that test scores on the same group of students often drop as the group progresses in school.

Aliteracy, (also spelled *alliteracy*), the condition of being able to read but not reading enough to benefit from the skill, becomes an issue in the teen years and may continue into adulthood. Libraries are in a particularly good position to counter aliteracy since it requires no direct instruction. Love of reading is as much caught as taught, and libraries have their ways to make reading attractive.

Teens who are still struggling or unwilling readers are in a very difficult position in high school. The school assumes students are or should be literate, so a large part of the instruction shifts to independent reading. Emphasis on teaching literacy almost disappears from school curricula after elementary school. Even in remedial or resource classes, emphasis is often more on developing coping skills and "workarounds" than on developing literacy. Students who have not developed fluent reading in spite of intervention likely have learning disabilities of one kind or another that continue to interfere with literate behavior. Students who don't read well are put in

less challenging classes where they do less reading and writing, effectively widening the gap, since reading and writing are skills that build through use. Young people whose reading skills are not fluent usually do poorly in school and often develop other problems, especially behavior problems, to accompany poor school achievement. Students with poor reading achievement sometimes find that their reading scores block their access to classes they might otherwise find interesting or motivating. Reading problems can become part of a downward spiral that is difficult to break. Literacy problems are a leading factor in students dropping out of high school; then the dropouts are faced with the prospect of taking the GED exam later in life. The five components of the GED test are exclusively reading and writing, with a reading level of 10th to 12th grade and a math level that includes word problems, some algebra, and some plane geometry. Staying in school is the best course for students who struggle with reading, but the support systems that might help them with literacy problems are often rather scant, despite the efforts of resource teachers, and the teens themselves are often resistant.

On the other end of the school achievement continuum, students who excel in school may be placed in such demanding classes that they have no time to read for pleasure or enrichment during the school year. Therefore students we might expect to be our most avid library users may not be reading except in school topics, also missing some life-long skills and literacy development. Reaching these students is one wonderful reason to have a teen summer reading program during the months, when they are not overwhelmed with academic work.

Interestingly, doing poorly in school is not necessarily a measure of low overall literacy. Some students who do not do well in school practice a sort of undercover or unofficial literacy, includes notes, letters, journals, comic books, online text, Internet use, e-mail, chat rooms, consumerism, and games. Some teens are rather fluent in this variety of literacy but never connect it with the literacy behaviors demanded in school and do not apply those skills to academic tasks. Libraries seem to be a natural place to encourage this kind of general non-school literacy. While it may not boost school achievement or establish academic uses of literacy, basic literacy skill grows through use, whether practiced in journals and letters or through writing school reports. Encouraging any kind of literacy behavior in teens helps them while they are teens and when they become adults. And getting them involved with books may help bridge the gap between selective and overall literacy behaviors.

The International Reading Association, in a position paper on adolescent literacy, emphasizes the idea that adolescent literacy is a continuum rather than a set point. As with adults, the literacy demands and the complexity of literacy demands placed on adolescents are higher than they have ever been. The International Reading Association's recommendations for the literacy needs of adolescent learners include at least three needs libraries can help meet directly:

- Access to a wide variety of reading material appealing to their interests, and instruction that builds the skill and desire to read increasingly complex materials.
- Teachers (or in this case, librarians) who understand the complexities of individual adolescent readers.
- Homes, communities, and a nation that supports the needs of adolescent learners.

Our collections are the perfect vehicle for giving adolescents “access to a wide variety of reading material that appeals to their interests...and desire to read increasingly complex materials.”

While there are few teachers operating exclusively out of libraries, tuned-in librarians who get to know individuals and provide good readers advisory can get a good grip on the complexities of individual adolescent readers. Libraries can be (and in many places already are) community organizations that support the needs of adolescent learners and tilt the balance toward an atmosphere valuing literacy.

The literacy principles that continue to guide us are extensions of the ones guiding us with older elementary schoolchildren:

- When readers spend time reading, they are building reading skill.
- When young people read texts that matter to them, they usually develop positive attitudes toward reading; this, in turn, leads them to read more and helps them become better readers as well as better thinkers.
- Reading builds knowledge of the world, which is valuable in its own right but is also tied to gaining background knowledge of both topics and text that enhance reading skill.

Reading while they are young starts teens on a lifelong reading habit, enriching and enlarging their lives throughout adolescence and adulthood. (Some of them won't have as much time to read again until they retire.)

Whether they are avid readers, casual occasional readers, reluctant readers, or even non-readers, teens are developing the relationship with reading that will continue into adulthood. Libraries can help shape that relationship and move it toward lifelong reading. In the process we move it toward lifelong learning and widening understanding of human experience.

It is important to note there are many reasons besides literacy to serve young adults. This notebook emphasizes literacy and urges librarians to think about the literacy implications of both collections and programming in addition to all the other life-affirming reasons to provide collections and programming for young adults.

Collections

Patrick Jones summarizes collection possibilities for teens and reminds us that while collections are essential to a library, the “stuff” isn't an end in itself.

While it is not the role of the library to teach reading, the issue of adolescent literacy is one that all staff working with teens needs to have on their radar screens. Support for adolescent literacy begins with an understanding of some of the reasons why young adults choose not to read. Teens who are poor readers will certainly associate reading with failure. Developing collections that contain high interests but low vocabulary materials may increase the chances that teens will succeed. Audio books, comic books, and even a collection of high-teen-appeal children's books may help struggling young adult readers succeed. But even those with skills may be aliterate – they can read, but choose not to. Collection development, in those cases, might need to steer more toward nonfiction or magazines which often do not require the same amount of time or concentration as fiction. Even teens that like to read often are confronted with negative pressures not to read, in particular, boys. Again, collection development in “hot”

nonfiction areas and magazines works against this stigma. Decorating the library with something as simple as ALA Read posters, such as those featuring male sports or movie stars, may put reading in a more positive light. Many young adults do not receive encouragement to read at home, and therefore libraries and classroom teachers must positively reinforce reading. This is a tricky proposition however, as one reason many teens “reject” reading is because a teacher or other adults force it on them. It is only by establishing relationships, and thus breaking down this natural teen barrier, that librarians can really begin to encourage reading. (32)

Selection guides, Web sites, and word-of-mouth help the librarian pick books and periodicals for teens. Sometimes reluctant or low-level readers prefer magazines and other non-book formats, even comic books. So called “high-low” or “hi-lo” books, that is, books written about high interest topics at a low reading level, when available for teens, can also help them bridge the literacy gap. They offer success to students who don’t experience much success and have the added advantage that when a teen is simply reading, he or she is getting better at it. Titles are limited but their number is growing; some graphic novels will fit into this category. A few books published for adult new readers might also help, as might some nonfiction meant for younger children that doesn’t look “kiddy.” Nonfiction that backs up traditional school subjects may also have its merits and is often available at below-grade-level reading levels. Some authors simply use more accessible writing styles than other authors. Often, educational catalogs attach reading levels to titles also available as trade books, and these can be of some help in forming the young adult collection. Building a collection that includes books for teens who are not yet good readers may take some book-by-book selection, but it is well worth it if we can help these teens become readers and reach real literacy. Building a total young adult collection that also serves teens who can read at the expected level supports increased literacy skill with many kinds of texts, builds knowledge and understanding, counters societal aliteracy, and develops the habit of lifelong reading.

Literacy remains a diversity issue in some ways, and teens may yield to peer or cultural pressure that says being a reader is either not acceptable within the group or else it is somebody else’s issue. So materials reflecting all people and invoking a diversity of accomplishment and background remain important in the young adult collection.

Graphic novels, those descendents of or elaborations on comic books, are found in more and more libraries for several reasons. As a literacy support strategy they are an attempt to simply get teens to read. While they create the impression of having a low reading level, many of them require considerable literacy skill. The text and illustrations don’t flow across a page in traditional left-to-right order, so context becomes important; but context is expressed differently from regular texts. Many use imaginary words or atypical spellings. Print may be small or in irregular typefaces. Part of the story line in graphic novels and comic books is yielded to illustrations. The print portion alone may be hard to follow, but at the same time the illustration may carry readers without fluent print literacy skills. The very lack of linear progression that raises the print reading level may work well for some learning disabled teens and even adults. Reading level is a fluid concept, and people can often manage text that interests them at a more difficult level than text in which they are not interested.

Teens might use audio books for the same reason adults do – they are busy, they spend large amounts of time in their cars, they can listen via a headset while doing something else, or they enjoy the performance aspect of well-read audios. Audio books have a hidden literacy agenda in inviting teens who don't handle print well to share the experiences of those who do. They provide motivation and help teens develop some of the same meaning-level skills the text version of the same book might. Recorded books are a time-honored technique teachers working with learning disabled students use to keep problems with print from stunting students academically. Given the popularity of audio books in the literate adult community, getting teens started on audio books may help them enter the world of full literacy through motivation and background knowledge.

Programming

There are many good reasons to have programs, activities, special collections, and a welcoming atmosphere for teens. Happily, as with so many other library efforts, literacy overlaps other activities.

Many programming events don't actually require literacy skill, but if teens attend them they are rubbing shoulders with literacy, being exposed to literate behavior, and at least observing reasons to read. While having fun at the library may not be a literacy activity in itself, the fact that the fun is at the library influences the atmosphere in favor of literacy.

Both programming and collections for teens often rely on pertinence (or at least on teens' perception of pertinence) to the lives young adults lead and to the issues young adults face. While younger patrons may only seek information about school projects or hobbies, teens often seek information about issues impacting them directly. While the aesthetic aspects of reading remain important, teens may now be led to see the library as an information place. We encourage their literacy if we make them aware of how much information is carried by printed words. They may also be interested in how privately information may be accessed through print.

Successful young adult programs often harness peer influence as a resource. Some libraries use a teen council to help plan programming and even materials purchase. Some libraries select teen reviewers for books in the collection. Others have had good success with Teen Friends of the Library or other structured teen volunteer efforts. Teens tend to bring in more teens, and teens who are able and avid readers may influence some of the more reluctant readers in the teen ranks in the direction of active, involved literacy.

Many libraries have successful young adult book groups or book events. The literacy value of leading teens to interact with text is large. In the end, reading is not really reading until the reader makes meaning of his or her own in response to the author's meaning. The major literacy tasks of high school, when all goes well, are learning to make deeper connections, read critically, and handle more varied texts. Book discussions and activities support this essential literacy activity. Even among teens who are active readers, support and experience help keep them active and build even more skill. In some education circles, there is great concern about the low

reading comprehension scores of high school students who can apparently manage text and decode adequately. The root of aliteracy is often that readers never respond to text sufficiently to see it connect to themselves or never catch on that the decoding is not an end in itself. Hearing the model of interaction with text and seeing other teens find books interesting, pertinent, and moving, helps teens with literacy at the same time discussion groups are helping them with the issues the books raise. Choosing books with an audio version for the group discussions invites teens who may still not be at the expected reading level to participate. (The interpretation offered by the reader whose voice is heard on the audio version tape may even become material for discussion at times.)

Much of the time of teen life revolves around school. Literacy issues are certainly most pronounced at school. Quiet collaboration with schools may lead to tutoring groups or homework helpers. Knowing what is happening at school can lead to book displays and interest groups as well as programs on whatever is happening at school, whether it is football, prom fashions, an author visit, or a recycling drive. On the other hand, some teens who do not use school-based literacy well may still use literacy skills in their lives outside school, and library programming gives them an opportunity to practice and perhaps enlarge literacy skill in ways they won't embrace at school.

As with upper elementary students, anything inviting participants to re-write, re-tell, or re-read boosts the literacy component of a program. The skill teens bring to such activities is often dramatically better than the skill with which younger children re-write, re-tell, or re-read. Actual public performance may now be possible for students who put together a choral reading or a drama. Many teens have the skill to read well to younger children or do a dramatic retelling of a story for youngsters even if their own reading is not "at grade level." Reading easy books to younger children is one concrete way to help them practice text they can read in a socially acceptable manner and keep them connected to the fun of reading.

Writing is still the other end of the reading process and people who gain skill in one usually gain skill in the other. Many teens want to be heard, and a teen writers guild or authors group might be a deep investment in both literacy and growth. By the teen years, many have sufficient skill to produce writings that other people will find interesting and moving, so the options for showcasing their work increase. Teen writings can lead to young adult events in coffeehouse, open mike, or author read-a-loud fashion. Inviting a local actor, author, or dignitary to read aloud or respond to teen writings is another option. Unlike younger patrons, teens can often spend more than a hour at a time at the library and function semi-independently, so a writing group can be hosted as an ongoing activity rather than a structured, timed program that must be prepared for weekly. Encouraging and mentoring a teen writers group would be a fine place for volunteer involvement by a qualified adult.

In summary, the literacy principles that apply to supporting young adults are the same as those that guide us with upper elementary patrons:

- If they are reading, they are getting better at it
- If they have reason to read (enjoyment counts as a reason), motivation will move them toward literacy

- If we can move them to avoid aliteracy and become involved readers, we enrich both their lives and society.

To be sure, when we provide good collections and programming for adolescents, we are doing more than aiding their literacy skills. But helping teens become fully literate and encouraging them to become readers are among the vital services libraries can provide to help young adult patrons make the sometimes difficult passage into thriving adulthood.

Works Cited

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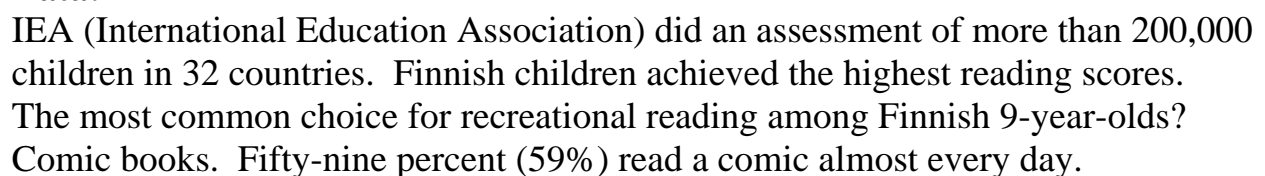
The full text of the International Reading Association's 1999 study and position paper on adolescent literacy may be found at or <http://www.reading.org/pdf/1036.pdf> or obtained through information available at <http://www.reading.org/focus/adolescent.html>.



- Comic book - flimsy single issue
- Trade paperback – in this case, a collection of comics in one volume
- Graphic novel - self-contained story not printed elsewhere

- Increase circulation
- Appeal to reluctant readers and at-risk youth
- Demonstrates to traditional and non-traditional teen library users that we are interested in serving them
- Appeal to boys

- Poor binding
- Some are poor quality literature
- Easily stolen
- Your Director/Board hates them



Teen Web Sites

<http://teenspace.cincinnatilibrary.org/> is a wonderful teen site with book reviews for teens by teens. This site has an amazing homework help area with links to SparkNotes, MegaSites, and periodicals, as well as tips on evaluation of the information we get on the Web. There are lists of award winning books for teens and when we click on winning titles we are taken to the ALA, YASIG page which lists many book lists and awards. This site has it all.

<http://www.teenreads.com/> is another great Web site with a lot of book reviews for teens by teens as well as in-depth author profiles and interviews. The site is part of Book Report Network, a group founded in 1996, which shares book reviews, author profiles and excerpts from the hottest new releases. The site <http://www.bookreporter.com/> has links to the teen read site as well as a kids reads site (<http://www.kidsreads.com/>) and reading group guides.

<http://www.grouchy.com/> has great teen book links, links to authors online, writing links, and even teen zines.

<http://www.teenlit.com/> provides a place to post your writings, read the writings of other teens, and read book reviews. Click on the writers workshop and you will find lots of writing tips from other teens, a page of editing marks and poetry tips. This is a great site for any teen with an interest in writing.

<http://www.rbls.lib.il.us/bpl-bin/series.pl> is a long address, but worth the typing. Maria Levetzow of the Bettendorf, Iowa Public Library has put together a wonderful searchable site of young adult series and sequel books. Everyone should bookmark this one.

<http://www.ala.org/yalsa> is the place to find current and previous winners of young adult award books. Also listed are popular paperbacks for young adults and quick picks for reluctant young adult readers, current and previous.

Activity Notes

Simple Steps To A Young Adult Read-In At The Library

GETTING READY:

1. Send adapted copy of the following news release to your local newspaper, television stations, radio and to middle and senior high schools for inclusion in their newspapers.
2. Distribute copies of the following (adapted) flier to schools and anywhere youth congregate. Plaster your library with them.
3. Purchase soda and paper goods.
4. Set up a display of popular reading material for teens to choose.
5. Copy a scavenger hunt from this handbook.
6. Clear meeting room of all furniture.
7. Order pizza.
8. Enlist at least one staff member to help you.
9. Follow the enclosed read-in schedule or adapt it to suit you.
10. Get ready to have a great time!

Teen Read-In Schedule

6 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.	Get Acquainted (mass pandemonium)
6:15 p.m. – 6:35 p.m.	Quiet reading time
6:35 p.m. – 6:50 p.m.	Teens go on scavenger hunt
6:50 p.m. – 7:05 p.m.	Teens discuss scavenger hunt answers
7:05 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	Quiet reading time
7:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.	Teens eat pizza, drink soda, and visit
8 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Teens read quietly
8:30 p.m. – 8:50 p.m.	As a group, teens discuss what they have read, what their favorite book is, and/or who their favorite author is
8:50 p.m. – 9 p.m.	Clean Up

Sample News Release

Contact Person: Teena Services, Librarian
Yourtown Public Library
222 Streetname Drive
Yourtown , MO 00000
333-333-3333

Area youth between the ages of _____ and _____ are invited to the Yourtown Public Library for a teen read-in. “We want our teens to know the library is an accessible, safe, and fun place for them,” said Teena Services, librarian.

Youth should phone or come by the library to register for the event, as we only have room for 25.

The program will begin at 6 p.m. and youth can bring their favorite blanket and pillow as well as any reading material they would like. We will also have reading materials available.

Not only will youth be reading, but they also will be participating in a scavenger hunt and eating pizza.

Parents must come to the door to pick up their teens at 9 p.m.

Sample Flyer

TEEN READ-IN

YOURTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2010

**If you are 13 to 19 years old and like to read
and eat pizza, you are invited to come by the
library at 222 Streetname Drive**

or

**Call 333-333-3333
to register for the teen read-in.**

**DO NOT DELAY
REGISTRATION IS LIMITED TO 25.**

**Parents must meet teens at the door at 9 p.m.
or we will turn them into frogs.**

Poetry Slam or Open Mike Night

Poetry slams are fun competitions. People usually sign up to read one or more poems in round robin. Judges, not usually experts, but people from the audience, rate the poems. The finalists read again usually for three rounds until a winner is chosen. There is a moderator/emcee.

Open Mike Nights offer people a chance to step up and read their original works, similar to a talent show. There is no judging.

Either of these can be low budget, low resource programs, or ones you can pour some extra money and time into. If you have the space and money, both work well as a “coffeehouse.” Set up small tables around the room; decorate the room with a coffeehouse or other theme. Subdued lighting and candles work well. Serve hot coffee, flavored teas, hot chocolate and cold drinks, along with cookies or donuts.

1. If you are conducting a poetry slam, choose three judges from your audience.
2. Decide whether participants may read only original poetry or poetry written by someone else. Have some poetry books on hand.
3. Set some time limits (usually 10 minutes maximum).
4. Recruit students through schools. English and creative writings teachers are good resources.
5. Design an attractive flyer to send to schools, recreation centers, churches, or wherever young adults congregate.
6. Encourage teens to invite others they know who would be interested.
7. Serve refreshments and let them have fun.
8. A microphone may or may not be necessary, depending on the size of your room.

Mad Libs®

Mad Libs can be used as part of a group activity, such as a read-in. Give each teen a copy of the answer sheet and ask them to fill it in as you call out the parts of speech. You can then have the teens that want to do so come up and read the story by placing their words in the blanks. I find even teens that hate to read will read their story because they just know theirs is the funniest.

Mad libs can also be used as a contest in your library. Teens can pick up an instruction sheet and an answer sheet and return the answer sheet when it is complete. Be sure to make sure their names are on the returned sheet. You can then copy the answers into the page with the blanks and give them to a popular public figure to pick out the top one or more. Prizes can be awarded and everyone who participates can be invited to a pizza party where they will have an opportunity to read their story.

I included the story first so that you could see how I made this one up. I wrote the story, then decided which words to leave out and what part of speech each deleted word was. I then completed the instruction and answer sheets.

You do not have to write your own though. Inexpensive Mad Libs® books can be purchased just about anywhere.

The Little Old Librarian

Do you know why people believe librarians are little old ladies with glasses and their hair in a bun? Let me tell you how it came about. I walked into my public library one day and walked to the fiction section to pick up something to read. A small ugly book caught my eye. When I opened the book, a huge rat appeared in a puff of smoke. He was as big as a man. I threw the book down and turned to run, but he blocked my way. He told me his name was Pat the Rat and he was the victim of an evil spell put on him by a librarian. Pat begged me to read him the first chapter of the book. He said that if I would, the spell would be broken and he would turn back into a beautiful genie and grant me 2 1/2 wishes. I decided that even though his breath smelled like rotten cheese, and his nose hairs needed clipping, I would do it. What choice did I really have? I was trapped. Pat sat down in a chair, put his huge head in his paws, and listened. The story was about three little pigs that built a house made of beautiful long golden hair and a gingerbread roof. Weird! As soon as I had uttered the last word of the chapter, he turned into a gorgeous genie with huge diamond earrings and tons of gold jewelry. He was so happy that he laughed and jumped around and ran. The librarian said we were disturbing the other patrons and made us leave, but not before I had Pat grant me my first wish: That librarians would always have the reputation of being little old ladies with glasses and buns.

The Little Old Librarian

Do you know why people believe librarians are little old ____ 1 ____ with glasses and their hair in a bun? Let me tell you how it came about. I ____ 2 ____ ____ 3 ____ into my public library one day and walked to the ____ 4 ____ section to pick up something to ____ 5 _____. A small ugly book caught my eye. When I ____ 6 ____ the book, a huge rat ____ 7 ____ appeared in a puff of smoke. He was as big as a man. I threw the book down and turned to run, but he blocked my way. He told me his name was ____ 8 ____ the rat and he was the victim of an evil spell put on him by a librarian. ____ 9 ____ begged me to read him chapter ____ 10 ____ of the book. He said that if I would, the spell would be broken and he would turn back into a ____ 11 ____ genie and grant me 2 1/2 wishes. I decided that even though his breath smelled like ____ 12 ____ cheese and his nose hairs needed clipping, I would do it. What choice did I really have? I was trapped. ____ 13 ____ sat down in a ____ 14 ____, put his huge head in his ____ 15 ____, and listened. The story was about three little pigs that built a house made of beautiful golden hair and a ____ 16 ____ roof. Weird! As soon as I had uttered the last word of the chapter, he turned into a ____ 17 ____ genie with huge ____ 18 ____ earrings and tons of ____ 19 ____ jewelry. He was so happy that he laughed and ____ 20 ____ ____ 21 ____ and ran. The librarian said that we were disturbing the other ____ 22 ____ and made us leave, but not before I had ____ 23 ____ grant me my first wish: That librarians would always have the reputation of being little old ____ 24 ____ with glasses and buns.

By ____ 25 ____

The Little Old Librarian Instructions

Instruct the young adults to fill in the their words and/or types of speech on the answer sheet.

1. Animal
2. Verb
3. Adverb
4. Adjective
5. Verb
6. Verb
7. Adverb
8. A name
9. Same name
10. A number
11. Adjective
12. Adjective
13. Same name as 8 & 9
14. Piece of furniture
15. Noun
16. Food
17. Adjective
18. Adjective
19. Adjective
20. Adverb
21. Verb
22. Animal
23. Name same as in 8, 9, 13
24. Same animal as #1
25. Famous person

Mad Lib Game Answer Sheet

NOUN: A person, place or thing (boy, shoe, fork, car)

ADJECTIVE: A word that describes a person place or thing (big, red, dark)

VERB: An action word (walk, sing, eat, read)

ADVERB: A word that describes a verb (slowly, bravely, loudly, badly)

PRONOUN: A word that takes the place of a noun (he, they, your, it, hers)

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| 1. | 14. |
| 2. | 15. |
| 3. | 16. |
| 4. | 17. |
| 5. | 18. |
| 6. | 19. |
| 7. | 20. |
| 8. | 21. |
| 9. | 22. |
| 10. | 23. |
| 11. | 24. |
| 12. | 25. |
| 13. | |

Library Scavenger Hunts

A library scavenger hunt sends teens looking through the collection for facts, collection objects, or information sources. There are many reasons to use library scavenger hunts in programming for teens.

1. Many at risk or reluctant readers have no idea where to find anything in the library. They might have an interest, but not know where to find the item of interest or even know the library has such an item. Many teens are surprised to learn that we have comics, *Mad Magazine*, *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, and *Nintendo Power*. We have a responsibility to teach our teens how to locate and use our materials.
2. Scavenger hunts can be used during a read-in, regular young adult group meeting, or for any time that you have a group of teens in the library. They can be written on any subject or no particular subject.
3. Scavenger hunts can be used as the basis for a contest. For example: Distribute copies of the scavenger hunt questions to teens in the library as part of a contest. Each teen who correctly completes the scavenger hunt by the determined time will receive a food coupon, an entry blank for a drawing where you give away a book or other item, or a voucher for \$1 off of their next library fine. Use your imagination.

An excellent resource for scavenger hunt question ideas is *The New Elementary School Librarian's Almanac* by Barbara Farley Bannister. The book gives ideas for each month of the school year, which include library skills activities, monthly themes, special days, and lists of author birthdays.

YA Scavenger Hunt #1

1. Look up the word “apple” in an encyclopedia. Name three different kinds of apples.
2. What is an apple maggot? Use an encyclopedia to discover the answer.
3. Apples are delicious. Use a thesaurus to find another word that means delicious.
4. Use the computerized catalog to find the titles and call numbers of two books about apples.
5. Use *The American National Biography* to find out why John Francis Appleby was famous. Hint: REF, 920.073, Ame, v1.

YA Scavenger Hunt#1 Answers

1. Jonathan, Gala, Winesap
2. wormlike larva of the apple fly
3. appetizing, palatable, sapid
- 4.
5. Invented a basic knotting device that became the foundation for all farm binding machinery

YA Scavenger Hunt #2

1. Eleanor Roosevelt was born in October. On what date was she born and what is one reason she is famous? Use a book to find your answer. What was your source?
2. The United States got a great bargain when it purchased Alaska on October 18, 1867. From whom was it bought and how much did it cost? Use the Internet to find your answer. At what site did you find the answer?
3. Use the Computerized Catalog to discover how many books with the word pumpkin in the title are in this library.
4. Is the pumpkin a vegetable or a fruit? What was the source you used for your answer?
5. Which spice is **not** included in a recipe for pumpkin pie? Yes, you will need to find a recipe.

Cinnamon

Salt

Fennel

Allspice

YA Scavenger Hunt#2 Answers

1. October 11, 1884; wife of Franklin Roosevelt; representative to the United Nations
2. Russia; 7.2 million, or 2 cents per acre
3. 24
4. World Book Encyclopedia– Found in P for pumpkin, a vegetable
New Book of Knowledge Encyclopedia- in V for vegetable
The American Heritage Student's Dictionary-fruit
The World Book Encyclopedia Dictionary-fruit
5. fennel

YA Scavenger Hunt#3

1. What in the world is allspice? What does it taste like? Your source?
2. Mickey Mouse was born in November. What was the date and year of his birth? Your source?
3. On what day of the week did Mickey celebrate his 1st birthday?
4. What is a baby turkey called?
5. National Book Week is in November. Who wrote the following quotation about books: "...and entertains the harmless day with a well-chosen book or friend?" Hint: Ref, 808.882, OXF.

YA Scavenger Hunt #3 Answers

1. A spice, a combination of cinnamon, cloves & nutmeg
2. November 18, 1928
3. Monday
4. poult
5. Sir Henry Wotton, Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, ref, 808.882, OXF

Notes for Library Scavenger Hunts

Scavenger hunts are fun for teens, and older elementary children, and even adults. They are instructional as they teach about both the library and the information found. They can be used alone, as an activity after a class tour, or as “filler” with other programs.

Anyone can write a scavenger hunt:

1. Keep your questions simple at first.
2. Allow youth to work in groups.
3. Gauge the number of questions to the amount of time allowed.
4. Set a time limit.
5. Provide a variety of questions that will allow for the use of different reference media and search tools.
6. Use your discussion of scavenger hunt answers to instruct on library usage.
7. Praise the teens for their participation and knowledge.
8. Ask participants to provide sources for their answers.
9. Check your library for the answer to every question and list your source on your answer sheet (there's a chance you will forget where you found something!)
10. Have fun with it!
11. A good source for ideas is: *The New Elementary School Librarian's Almanac*, Barbara Farley Bannister, ISBN 0876286058.

The Basics:

1. Make copies of the scavenger hunt questions for as many youth as you believe will be attending.
2. Distribute copies of hunt questions and answers to any library personnel that might be approached by youth for help.
3. Gather youth and give each one a copy of the hunt questions. They may work in groups of their choosing or alone. If you have a teen who may have a hard time finding answers, quietly suggest to a more knowledgeable youth that he/she takes the other “under their wing.”
4. Give youth a time to be back in the room, usually 15-20 minutes.
5. Set out snacks while your teens are hunting. When they return, discuss hunt answers while they eat.

Remember:

Have fun! Make the hunt like a game.

Keep it simple!

Don't try to make up your questions without finding the answers in your library.

Don't pressure anyone to respond - it will seem too much like school!

Cooperative Programs

One way to reach our at-risk teens is through partnerships with our schools. (Low literacy is often part of being at risk.) At the Hannibal Public Library, we have implemented three cooperative programs. These samples may help other communities develop programs that work in their own communities.

EXPLORATORY READING

This program began several years ago when I was contacted by a 6th grade teacher of a small (six to ten students) at-risk reading class. The students in the at-risk class are chosen by the 6th grade reading teacher on the basis of their 5th grade reading level tests. The students must be one or two grade levels lower than other 5th grade readers, but at the same time not qualify for the learning disability program.

Each year I visit several of these classes. I spend thirty to forty-five minutes reading and booktalking some of my favorite read-a-loud picture books to the students. I talk to them about how much fun it is to read to the younger children in their homes and when they are babysitting. I explain that it is a good excuse for checking out picture books. I make sure the books I take are fun with attractive illustrations. I leave a variety of books, which I have already checked out to the teacher. The students then choose a book, which they would like to read aloud, and are given class time to practice reading their choice. Later, the students are taken to a grade school to read to children in kindergarten and/or 1st grade.

When I asked the teacher if she thought the program was successful, she said yes. The 6th grade students had an opportunity to mentor someone, and as a result, they developed a new self-confidence about their reading ability and some even developed a joy of reading. The teacher also noted that the children who had been read to wrote thank you notes to their reader, which was a further boost to her students.

Within the school, the class is called an Exploratory Reading Class. The program continues.

LUNCH AT THE LIBRARY

Another cooperative program with school staff is called Lunch at the Library. The students involved are in a 7th grade exploratory reading class. They are chosen based on their 6th grade reading level tests. The class is made up of six to ten students whose reading scores are one to two grade levels lower than 7th grade. They also do not qualify for the learning disability program. The school packs sack lunches, which the teacher brings and the library provides soda and a dessert. At one lunch, the students had earned personal pan pizzas and these were delivered to the library.

The students are given a tour of the young adult area and a hands-on explanation of the young adult call numbers. They are also given a tutorial on the library automated catalog system. The

students are then assigned a partner and asked to complete a scavenger hunt. The scavenger hunt questions involve location of young adult materials, with a focus on items of interest such as lower reading level fiction, graphic novels, comics, magazines, audio books, and high interest nonfiction. High interest nonfiction at our library includes biographies of famous celebrities and athletes, drawing books, recipe books, and sports books, especially skate boarding. The same class may have two or three lunches at the library during the school year.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL VISITS

In addition to booktalking in our private and public school reading classes, I visit our alternative school at least four times a year. There is a direct connection between poor reading ability and scholastic achievement. Many, but not all, students in our alternative schools are scholastic underachievers. The majority have behavior problems. I believe many times these students' poor behavior and underachievement in school are directly related. Many have a poor and frustrating home life with little or no support from family. At school they are frustrated by their inability to keep up, and in their frustration they act out and become students with behavior problems. There is not much we can do about their home/family lives, but if we can increase their reading ability we have a good chance at helping them become better scholastic achievers. When I visit these students, I hope to demonstrate to them that they are worthwhile and valuable. As I choose books to talk to them, I consider their needs. These teens particularly like to read about people who have overcome great obstacles, thus the popularity of books such as Dave Pelzer's *A Child Called It*, and Louis Sachar's *Holes*. I do not worry so much about presenting good literature, although I think *Holes* certainly qualifies as such. I focus instead on appeal, format and specific materials for lower-level readers.

In addition, during this past school year the alternative school visited the library once a month for four months for a program very similar to Lunch at the Library. We did not always have lunch, but we did have snacks and soda. The teens participated in scavenger hunts and had some quiet reading time with discussion following. In the discussion, there were no right or wrong comments or opinions about the material they were reading.

I have found these students are more apt than students in mainstream classes are to stop by the library to visit or talk to me about what they are reading or should read.

Because the majority of students in alternative schools are at risk, booktalking to them is a wonderful opportunity to promote literacy to a concentrated audience of needy teens.

Booktalks

What is a booktalk? It's what you say to someone to convince them to read a book. Why booktalk? To stimulate reading for fun! In addition to the other benefits of reading for fun, reading for fun builds literacy. Time spent reading is linked to increased reading achievement. Here are some hints to help you prepare a booktalk.

1. As you read a book, keep a notebook handy to jot down page numbers of important information or good read-aloud passages. When you're done with the book, decide if you want to talk it.
2. Write it out. A booktalk can be all your own words, part your words and part book passage or all book passage – whatever feels right to you.
3. When you're done, edit it and cut what you don't have to say. Then practice. Practice to your spouse, to the mirror, to yourself, even to the dog, but practice!
4. Your booktalk can be 30 seconds or 5 minutes, whatever you're comfortable with. (Booktalks over 5 minutes lose their intensity.)
5. Feel theatrical? Add music or props. For instance, hold a hatchet while booktalking *The Hatchet*. Wear a cowboy hat while booktalking *Sunshine Rider: The First Vegetarian Western*. Play a recording of a love song while booktalking *Thwonk!*
6. A literacy note: previewing a book helps struggling readers understand it.

Do...

- ☺ Know your audience – keep it age appropriate.
- ☺ Read and like the book.
- ☺ Whether it's fiction or nonfiction, show the book.
- ☺ Keep it under 5 minutes.
- ☺ Maintain eye contact.
- ☺ Mention the title and author before and after.
- ☺ Tell your audience where they can locate the book in your library, or have copies available to check out.
- ☺ Leave your audience with a question about the book or the story in their minds.

Don't...

- ☹ Memorize (unless you're really comfortable with it).
- ☹ Give away too much.
- ☹ Get into subplots - keep it simple.
- ☹ Portray a book as better than it is.

Some notes on booktalks from an enthusiastic practitioner

Every librarian working with teens should have a few booktalks up his/her sleeve. Booktalks are a good way to sell books to teens on an individual basis, promote books to reading groups, and a most excellent way to get your foot in the door of a reading class. I need to mention that booktalks differ from book reviews in that they are designed to motivate the listener to read the book, to hook them, and leave them hanging. Many times after a booktalk, a student will raise their hand and ask me what happens in the book. Of course, I do not tell them but I am encouraged because I know that they want to hear “the rest of the story.”

When teens come to us in the library and ask for a good book to read, we can use booktalks to give them choices. One of the things I always tell a person when I am encouraging them to booktalk is that they must have read and liked the book. If we have done this, we can talk with genuine enthusiasm about the book and enthusiasm is as catching as chicken pox.

We have a young adult group that meets monthly during the school year to read and discuss books. At the beginning of each year, I do booktalks on a few books that I think the teens might enjoy. Individuals in the group make impromptu talks on what they would like to read and discuss. The teens then vote on what they want to read. When leading the book discussion I ask questions such as: What was your favorite part in the book? Why? What was your least favorite part? Why? Who was your favorite character? Why? Which character did you like the least? Why? If you could change one part of the book, what would it be and how would you change it? Were you satisfied with the end? Why or why not?

Our teachers are busy people who are usually happy to have someone visit their class, especially if that person is there to encourage their students to read. The students enjoy having a class visitor, as it provides a distraction from the regular schedule. This gives us an advantage because the reason for our visit is simply to portray reading as fun and to motivate readers and non-readers alike to read for the fun of it whether that means fiction, nonfiction, magazines, cookbooks, newspapers, training manuals, or comic books. My advice is to get a few booktalks ready and approach a teacher about visiting her class. If one class enjoys your visit then you are on your way. The word will spread and you will be invited to other classes.

For expert information on how to booktalk, look for publications by Joni Bodart and Patrick Jones. I learned just about everything I know about booktalking from them. Some samples for you to borrow or draw from follow.

Booktalk
This Side Of Paradise
Steven L. Layne

About a year ago my dad went to work for the Eden Company. He said it was the perfect place to work. His boss, the mysterious Adam Eden even had his own community - Paradise.

I didn't think too much about it - his job - until my dad said we were moving to Paradise. Of course my brother and I didn't want to leave our home, our friends or our school but we had no choice.

Read Page 32, part of the 1st paragraph:

I've heard of gated communities where every well-to-do family has well-to-do neighbors on either side, but Paradise was in a class all by itself. It was not a gated community: it was a gated village! As we approached the entrance, enormous brick columns - 10 to 12 feet tall with wrought-iron fencing seemed to encapsulate the land for as far as the eye could see. The landscape beyond the entrance was a Monet come to life. Through the opening at the gatehouse, we could view a magnificent lake with water as clear and blue as the purest sapphire, and birds seemed to be singing from within the village. We could make out several varieties of flowers and trees as we drove toward the gatehouse, and it seemed a certainty that even more wonders awaited us within.

The whole town was perfect and the new house was beautiful - perfect, better than any house we could have dreamed of owning.

The school "The Garden School" was perfect too. The students were perfect - too perfect. So perfect that they almost seemed like robots, which is of course impossible.

My father had always been a perfectionist but now he become like a madman. He expected us to be perfect. Mostly I just tried to avoid him, and then one day my brother refused to wear the Garden School uniform. My dad beat him. That was scary, but what was even scarier was when my brother tried to call the police and was told: We have no police – this is paradise.

From *This Side of Paradise* by Steven L. Layne.

Booktalk:
The Night I Disappeared
Julie Reece Deever

Something scary was happening to 17-year-old Jamie Tessman. Jamie's mother was the defense attorney in a high profile murder case being tried in Chicago, so they had to move there. Jamie missed Webb, her one and only friend. She had been with Webb every day since she was 9 years old and being apart from him was hard. But not only did Jamie miss her sort-of boy friend, something crazy was going on in her head. Ever since Jamie and her mother had arrived at their temporary home in Chicago, she had been plagued by these freaky mind slips; she didn't know what else to call them.

In these daydreams or mind slips, it's like Jamie really is with Webb and talking to him. I think we all do that – imagine conversations in our head. But what was weird was that instead of having her eyes closed or staring into space like we usually do when we are daydreaming, Jamie was talking to Webb aloud. She was making gestures and looking at him and in her mind she was really with him in a variety of places. To other people it appeared that she was talking to someone who was invisible. Gradually it was getting worse, and Jamie was out of it for longer periods of time. Thankfully, Jamie was alone a lot of the time but people began noticing, and Jamie was sure she was losing her mind.

Then one day she had one of the daydreams/mind slips in the courtroom when court was in session, and when she came to every person in the court was staring at her and the bailiff was telling her that she had to leave. It was now clear to everyone Jamie needed professional help and she was admitted to a psychiatric ward.

From *The Night I Disappeared*, by Julie Reece Deaver.

Booktalk
Shattering Glass
Gail Giles
(mature)

Rob Haynes was the most popular boy in school. He had a way with people. He could charm just about anyone. Rob was our leader, the Bobster's, Coop's and mine. We did whatever he wanted us to do and I mean whatever! Rob decided that we should take Simon Glass under our wing and change him ... make him popular.

From the book, page 1:

Simon was textbook geek. Skin like the underside of a toad and mushy fat. His pants were too short and his zipper gaped about an inch from the top. And his Fruit of the Looms rode up over his pants in back because he tucked his shirt into his tightey-whiteys. He had a plastic pocket protector, no joke, crammed with about a dozen pens and a calculator.

It was retro-cool in our part of Texas to wear loafers or Top-Sider boat shoes without socks; but Simon wore crepe-soled black lace-up wingtips.

Simon Glass was easy to hate. I never knew exactly why, there was too much to pick from. I guess, really, we each hated him for a different reason, but we didn't realize it until the day we killed him.

From *Shattering Glass*, by Gail Giles.

Booktalk
The Body Of Christopher Creed
Carol Plum-Ucci

From back flap of hardback:

Dear Mr. Ames,

I have a problem getting along with people. I know that people wish I were dead, and at this moment in time I see no alternative but to accommodate them in this wish. I have a wish. Not that anybody cares, but if anybody cared over the years, it was you. Here is my wish. I wish that I had been born somebody else – Mike Healy, Jose DeSantos, Tommy Idle, Evan Lucenti, Torey Adams, Alex Arrington. . . .

I don't understand why I get nothing and these boys get everything – athletic ability, good personalities, beautiful girlfriends. I am sure their parents will be buying them cars next year, while I will still be riding my bicycle until my parents decide I am old enough. Quite possibly, I will be twenty-five. I wish to understand life and luck and liberty. But I will never do that confined to this life, the personality defects I have been cursed with, the lack of abilities, the strain. I wish no malice on anyone. I only wish to be gone. Therefore I AM.

*Yours respectfully,
Christopher Creed*

That was the e-mail sent to our school principal by Chris. There is nothing unusual about a runaway these days. There is also not much original about a suicide or a murder. The weirdest fact about Chris Creed's disappearance was that he was just plain gone. There was no trail of blood, not even a drop. No piece of clothing on the side of the road. No runaway bus-ticket stub. No money missing from his bank account. No empty bottle of pills. No missing razor blades. No nothing. The only thing we knew was that Chris had not been abducted – because of the note, which was written at least 24 hours before he turned up missing. Chris grew up as the class freak – the bullies' punching bag. My name, Torey Adams, was on that list Chris sent to the principal. All I could think about was my own cruelty and the fact that I had been part of Chris's misery, and I knew I needed to find out what happened to him; find out the truth.










From *The Body of Christopher Creed*, by Carol Plum-Ucci.


Teen Book Discussion Groups

Libraries can reinforce literacy while doing other good things for teens

Teens are interested in joining book discussion groups for the same reason adults like book discussion groups – it's fun and they meet people! From a literacy point of view, book groups also get teens reading and expand their ability to interact with text. Expanding the ability to interact with the text raises comprehension levels. The discussion around the book and plot builds background knowledge and models active reading. The pleasure of the group encourages teens to spend time reading, a practice known to help literacy achievement.

Try these helpful hints when starting a teen book discussion group in your area.

-  Choose a staff member who enjoys working with teens to lead the group. This can be anyone from the reference staff to the circulation staff to your bookshelvers.
-  Book discussion groups can be held at the library, at the school, or at another friendly and safe place. A few libraries have even taken them inside juvenile detention centers or group foster homes.
-  *Provide refreshments when possible.* Food is a drawing factor. Teens enjoy cookies and cokes, bagels and coffee, and pizza parties.
-  Provide a comfortable space for teens to relax and lounge as they discuss the book. Try couches and beanbag chairs.
-  Schedule your book discussion group for a day and time that will have the least conflict for your teens. Avoid heavy homework nights. Consistency is a key factor. Make your book discussion group meet on the same day, at the same time, in the same location each month.
-  Work with the school library in allowing teens to pick up the book discussion group books both there and at your library.
-  If possible, purchase a paperback copy of the book discussion book for each teen to read before the first discussion session. If your library budget cannot bear the cost of these books, consider working with a community partner who will help – a local bank, business, or health care provider.
-  Consider a genre book discussion group or groups that keep on going or last over time.
-  Let the teens have a say in the decision making process. Solicit their opinions. Choose books that teens are interested in reading, not books that will be seen as too “young” or “juvenile” by your group.

 **ADVERTISE, ADVERTISE.** Post flyers around the school and any place else teens hang out, send out personalized invitations, put an article in the school newspaper, and set up displays in the school library and in your library. Be sure to include any program co-sponsors in program promotion.

Remember:

Start out small and don't become discouraged too soon. If it's not working, talk to teens to see how the program can be improved; then revamp, and try again. There is a lot of interest out there in teen book discussion groups, so experiment with what works in your community and with a particular group of teens.

From a literacy point of view, vary the reading level of books so the text won't always be hard for participants. Also consider using titles available in audio to encourage teens who can't read well or don't want to read to ease into the book discussion experience. Using audio lets teens develop comprehension skills and interact with the story being told even if they can't handle the printed text very well. In the long run this actually helps their literacy levels.

If other circumstances and resources are right, consider forming a book discussion group at a teen parenting center, alternative school, or juvenile detention center. While low literacy may not be the reason teens are in these programs, experience and statistics lead us to expect that many of them will have reading problems. A book discussion group in a place where struggling or disaffected teens might participate has literacy benefits as well as benefits to help them connect with universal human experience, deal with their own lives, and relate to other people.

How To Do Your First Teen Summer Reading Program

At the Hannibal Public Library, we define “teen” as anyone who has completed 6th grade through the age of nineteen.

When we did our first summer reading program for teens, there were no materials available from the state. We simply adapted the format for recording reading from our children’s program. An artistic teen patron designed the artwork for our reading log and flyers. We then advertised by sending press releases to the newspapers, radio and television stations and the middle and high schools. The food coupons used for our children as weekly rewards were used for our teens. We did however, contact several businesses for grand prizes, which were more suitable for teens. A local bank donated a \$50 savings bond, our Wal-Mart store donated a \$25 gift certificate and a local putter golf business donated some free game passes. The children’s and young adult programs were totally separate, with the teen reading logs kept close to the adult circulation desk and young adult materials. Our children’s department is on a different floor. We felt it was important for our teens to know this program was not a part of the children’s program. As the teens recorded the titles of the books they read, they were given a drawing slip. These were placed in a box and used for our grand prize drawing at the end of the program. On the last day of the program, we put soda on ice, ordered pizza, and made multiple copies of a scavenger hunt. All participating teens were invited to this program. We did a “get acquainted” activity and sent the teens on the scavenger hunt. When the youth returned to the meeting room we discussed the scavenger hunt answers as they ate pizza. We then did the grand prize drawing. This program, our first young adult program, was very scary for me but the teens seemed to have a good time.

One instrumental thing we did was to start a monthly young adult group meeting at our library during the school year. As the teens came into the library and filled out their reading logs, they were asked to fill in a survey form. The form we used was adapted from the Missouri State Library publication, “Bridging the Gap.” We removed several of the questions and added the following:

Would you be interested in being part of a group of teens that meets at the library monthly to read and discuss books, and advise the library staff on what materials you believe would be good in our young adult collection?

If the teens answered yes to the question, they were asked to fill in their name and address. We then used this list of names and addresses to generate a mailing list. We scheduled our first meeting and sent postcards to each teen that had indicated an interest. We continue to gather new names for our mailing list from the summer reading club. (Yes, I do weed it.) I continue to send postcards a week to ten days before each meeting. We have had as few as three and as many as 21 teens at a single young adult meeting.

Now there are tools available through the state of Missouri to help you in planning your teen summer reading program. A reproducible manual, *Book Your Summer*, is available online at the Missouri State Library Web site. This publication has excellent tips on doing your first program. In addition, each year the State Library sends every public library a children’s summer reading club manual and a teen summer reading program manual.

One of the things that pleases me the most about our teen summer reading program and young adult group is that we have teens from all walks of life who participate; teens who love to read and are scholastic achievers as well as teens who are at risk and participate because they need to be a part of something. Our libraries offer programs for teens that do not qualify for any extracurricular activities at school because of their low grades. Many times all an at-risk child or teen needs is someone to be happy to see them and believe that they are valuable and worthwhile.

Top Ten Ways to Ruin a Teen Summer Reading Program

10. *Make sure that all your books are hardbacks, or your paperbacks are ragged and outdated.*

Teens prefer paperbacks in good-looking condition. Try to “refurbish” or restock the YA collection before the summer reading program. Make sure you have plenty of all types of genres, especially series.

9. *Don't send promotional materials to schools.*

The public and private schools are a wonderful way to promote any activities at the library. Personal contact is the best way to promote the programs, but sending publicity to the classes works, too. Send bulk to the schools, but send individual flyers to teachers in the area, especially ones you've worked with before, or you know have a special interest in a program.

8. *Make the program as hard as possible for participants and staff.*

The KISS principle works best. If the program is too complicated, teens aren't going to participate. They like to be independent and if they have to ask too many questions, they just won't take part.

The staff involved in the actual implementation of the program are very important factors in the success of the program. If they don't “buy into” the reading program, it isn't going to work. The less time they need to spend dealing with explaining the rules or handing out materials and prizes, the better chance they will enjoy or at least be willing to help in the program. Give them a chance to do the fun parts of the program as well as the daily tasks.

7. *Be rigid in interpreting the rules / Don't be flexible.*

Each participant in the program is an individual, and the program should reflect his or her individuality. The rules are guidelines for the program, but making the participant's needs or interests count goes a long way to guaranteeing success.

6. *Make lists of specific books participants must read.*

All teens don't like the same thing, and if you make lists or give them books to read, they will view it as homework. Be flexible with what you allow them to read, including both the topic and the format. Many teens are daunted by a hardcover novel, but will happily read a magazine from cover to cover.

5. *Have the librarians view the program as another of the endless tasks assigned to them.*

Getting the staff to go along with the extra work a teen reading program will bring can be hard, but getting the staff excited about teens participating in the program is just as important as getting the teens excited. Find ways to involve staff in developing the program, including asking for their opinions. If the teens feel like they are a bother to the library staff they won't continue participating, and neither will their friends.

4. *Make the publicity and promotional materials drab and lifeless.*

Attractive, colorful and lively materials for publicity, and for the program participants, is a big deciding factor in the success of a program. If the forms, instructions, posters, etc., don't catch their attention, it is going to take a big push to get them interested in the program.

3. *Don't publicize the program at all.*

Word of mouth, posters, newspaper articles, etc., are essential to the success of the program. If teens don't know about the program they aren't going to participate. Publicity needs to be in the community for parents, teachers, grandparents, and the teens themselves to know about it. Having the program announced on radio stations or TV spots gives much more exposure!

2. *Don't give incentives, or give age-inappropriate incentives.*

Getting a prize, reward, or something free is exciting no matter what age you are. So getting something for participating in the program is a great way to get more teens involved. But make sure the incentives are things they will like and things they don't feel are too childish for them. Giving them a choice of what they can have is a good way to make sure you have something for everyone.

1. *Have the program registration and publicity located in the children's department or have the same program and theme as the children's department.*

This is the ultimate kiss of death to the success of a teen program. Making the teens feel like they are being treated like children, or as if they were at the same level as people half their age, is a big insult to them. Make them feel like there is something of their own at the library. Make them feel they are special enough to have their own program. Make them feel like you view them not as children, but as young adults.

Teen Summer Reading Dos and Don'ts

Follow these tips to make your teen programs more manageable and enjoyable for the teens and the library staff.

DO!

- ☺ Keep it simple
- ☺ Have lots of prizes
- ☺ Let teens participate with friends
- ☺ Advertise where teens congregate (movie theatres, bookstores, video stores, schools)
- ☺ Start out small with few expectations
- ☺ Have patience and be flexible
- ☺ Make it easy for teens to succeed
- ☺ Provide bibliographies, bookmarks, and/or table displays promoting authors and literature of interest to teens
- ☺ Ask for local teen input in planning and implementing your program
- ☺ Have fun and stay happy!

DON'T!

- ☹ Put participants' names on the library walls, or otherwise make them feel like "little kids"
- ☹ Breathe down their necks
- ☹ Make it competitive
- ☹ Expect large numbers of teens to sign up
- ☹ Judge the teen program participation against participation in your children's program
- ☹ Lose your mind!

What libraries do for teen literacy in Missouri

A list of library literacy efforts, ideas, activities, and collaborations

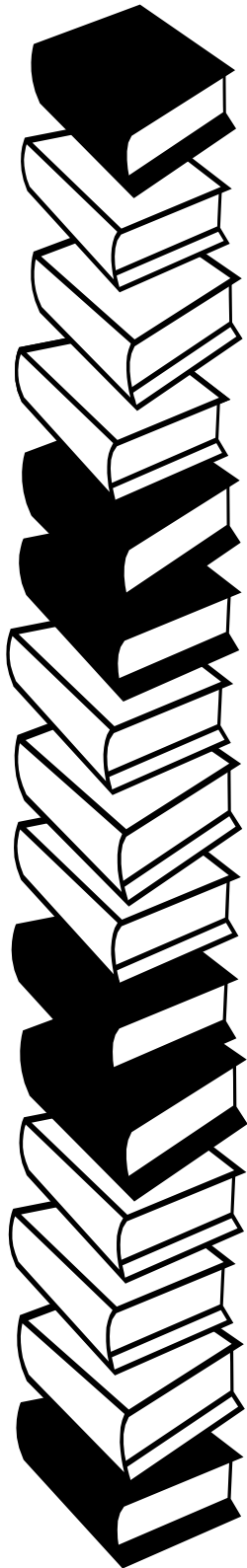
Literacy efforts in Missouri's libraries are diverse, and they represent many kinds of service and literacy support. The ideas collected below come from libraries in Missouri, some previously done, others are in process, and still others ideas being developed. They are collected here as a catalogue of ideas that any other library in Missouri might borrow to increase library literacy efforts. The best ideas often come from the trenches!

- Young adult book groups.
- Young adult writers group.
- Teen group that performs or act as storytellers.
- Poetry slams, open mike nights, or storytelling events by and for teens.
- Read-a-thons, sometimes to raise money for a charity, sometimes for fun.
- Teen versions of ESOL conversation partners groups, if there is an immigrant population in the area.
- Partnerships for reading efforts with local schools, both programming and having certain materials that correlate with programs at the school.
- Activity time set aside for a group foster home.
- Drama reading group in a juvenile detention facility.
- Public library presentations and book talks at schools.
- Teen classes/groups for books, or hobby groups/interest groups. (Reading about the hobby or interest is an integral part of the program.)
- Teen summer reading with incentives from local businesses.
- Programs pairing teens with younger children for mutual reading benefit.
- Teens assisting with programming for younger children .
- Teens tutoring senior citizens on the computer. (The literacy connection is the text on the screen and instruction sheets or notes, but there are other benefits.)

There are good reasons besides literacy to do programming for teens. These ideas focus on literacy, but any involvement with reading or the library helps create an atmosphere in which literacy is valued and practiced.

Reproducible Information

14 Reasons Why Books Are Better Than TV



1. You don't have to look at a 'guide' to see when you can read what book.
2. You can get a snack and not miss a thing.
3. You don't need to hunt for the lost remote.
4. Your parents won't gripe at you for reading too much.
5. You can answer the phone and not miss anything.
6. You'll score major points with your teachers.
7. Books are free at your library.
8. There are no stupid commercials about the medicine you should take to relieve your hay fever, indigestion and excess gas.
9. You can do it in the car (only not when you're driving).
10. You don't need electricity to read at night. You can use a flashlight.
11. You don't have to worry about the cable going off.
12. You don't get interrupted with breaking news on a politician's personal life.
13. You don't have to wait until tomorrow to find out the ending.
14. You can enjoy it outside.

Section Six

Second Chances at Literacy: Serving Low-Literate Adults

Literacy Notes for Librarians Serving Low-literate Adults

Adult low-literacy is the thorniest of the literacy problems. In spite of nearly universal schooling, insufficient literacy skills affect between a fifth and a fourth of adults in Missouri. Absolute illiteracy is now rather unusual, at least among non-disabled native speakers of English. However, low literacy, that is, having some literacy skill but not enough to succeed in this society at this time, is distressingly common. The literacy demands of daily life in the United States continue to rise as the information age progresses, as technology becomes mandatory, and as jobs without literacy demands have become obsolete or moved overseas.

Adults are not children. That seems obvious. But for decades educators generalized from K-12 education when they taught adults. Increasingly, educational philosophy recognizes that a re-run of K-12 instruction is not the most effective way to teach low-literate adults. Studies of the reading process in adults are now in progress. One firm finding emerging from both studies and experience is that the differences in the life situations of adult learners and child learners are crucial. A second strong finding is the adults' need for literacy improvement in context and connection with the lives they are living. Adults filter literacy learning through much experience and many time constraints. While the emerging principles concerning instructional techniques may not apply to library efforts, many affirm what libraries have been doing in adult programming for some time. The "whole life" approach and accessibility of libraries fit well with the needs of adults who are trying to improve their literacy, if we can prepare ourselves to serve them and convince them to use what we offer. In an educational world where more and more depends on tests, libraries are free to simply provide accessible materials and information to meet the life needs of patrons whether or not it raises test scores. Research affirms this, too, is a literacy effort.

While libraries serving low-literate adults often reap many rewards, adult new readers and adult literacy students are admittedly not a patron group easy to serve. It certainly benefits both individuals and communities if low-literate adults are being supported as they become more literate. There are multiple ways to serve low-literate adults. Libraries can choose or create a model that works for their community.

Knowing some parameters of the problem may help libraries shape successful efforts. In adults, low literacy tends to be part of a cluster of problems. The problems that result from low literacy shape adults' lives in negative ways, while other problems restrict their literacy skill and opportunities to become literate. Statistics suggest three-fourths of the people who need literacy improvement do not enroll in adult education programs. This opens a space for library services and community efforts in which libraries might be valuable partners. Native speakers who reach adulthood without literacy skill often have learning disabilities or other problems that make reaching full literacy difficult. They often have life situations, past experiences with schooling, and long-standing habits that work against them. Partnerships with agencies provide other services are often a fruitful approach.

In addition, adult education programs are being challenged by rising numbers of teenagers in adult education classes. The reasons for this are not yet clear, but high-stakes educational testing, increasingly rigid high school programs (often in response to high-stakes testing or increased security concerns and behavior issues), recreational drug use, and a general disaffection among the teen population all seem to be involved.

There are definitely challenges. To serve low literate adults we have to draw them in and we have to help them learn the library culture. Everything we do in a library is literacy based, and despite our attempts to be user friendly, the library can be a fearsome place for the uninitiated. Although low-literate adults may not respond in great numbers, some will respond, changing both their own situations and the community around them, perhaps even breaking the cycle of low literacy for their children. In most cases lives are changed one at a time, a fact librarians who work with individual patrons have long realized. A library that can be part of the change for even a few formerly-low-literate adults does service to both individuals and the community. Such libraries also build their own support bases.

So we turn again to looking at our collections and our programming to see how we might serve low-literate adults.

Thinking about collections for low-literate adults and adult new readers

Considerable evidence shows that for adults as well as for children, reading improves with practice. Recreational reading raises reading levels and helps the mind in other ways. Other people's stories told in books enrich our souls and give us new direction, and adults who still struggle with literacy are often in need of that. Books and periodicals that low-literate adults can actually read are an important part of adult literacy efforts.

Usually books the library has specifically for low-literate adults are called "Adult New Reader Collections." Mainline publishing houses seem not to know that about a fourth of the people in the USA could use versions of books and magazines written at easier levels than what they are publishing, whether because those people have reading problems or because English is not their native language. An adult new reader collection attempts to find materials to serve that quarter of the population and assemble the materials for easy access. Most material printed especially for adult new readers comes from educational publishing houses. They often offer a few "high-low" (high interest – low reading level) books for adults alongside educational texts. These high-low materials are usually either leisure reading books written especially for adults at low reading levels, or nonfiction life skills and survival materials. A discussion of sources for adult new reader materials is contained in this handbook.

The task of finding materials for adult new readers is difficult for literacy beginners. (Publishable material using the same few hundred words over and over is understandably rare.) It is probably necessary to buy materials book by book, but even if there are only a dozen books in the new reader collection, that is more than some patrons have ever read before. This kind of collection may also be useful to young adults who struggle with reading. Literacy tutors should know

about these materials. Adding materials for low-literate adults to the collection somehow can increase the literacy focus of the library.

There are both advantages and challenges to an adult new reader collection.

Advantages of an Adult New Reader Collection	Challenges of an Adult New Reader Collection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This collection encourages adult literacy and expands the literacy support offered at the library. • Some materials will also serve low-literate teens and non-native English speakers. • The presence of the collection opens the door for cooperation with adult literacy providers and programs. • An adult new reader collection fills a need and a niche almost certainly not filled by any other organization in the area. • An adult new reader collection helps libraries serve the entire community and has the potential to expand patron bases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials that fit both library procedures and low-literate adults' needs are limited and sometimes difficult to find. (There are tips for finding them in this handbook.) • Once in the library, low-literacy materials often don't circulate or have high loss rates. • People who need material at an easy reading level may be reluctant to use it or simply not think about using it. • Materials for low-literate adults sometimes have a format awkward for library shelves, although this is changing. • The collection will not be used automatically; some marketing and encouragement will be needed.

Librarians who can't provide a consolidated new reader collection, or who want both a consolidated low-literacy section and something else, have found other ways to make adult new reader materials convenient and attractive. Some mix easy material with regular material in mini-collections or sections that contain a mixture of reading levels. Some examples: a parenting collection, a Missouri collection, an African-American collection, etc. Some libraries find easy materials circulate if they are incorporated this way, and these subject-classified sections have the advantage of serving all patrons. Another approach is to mark easy material with a small dot or star and scatter it throughout the collection so it is easy to spot. Librarians who take this approach argue that it pushes low-literate patrons to look at the entire collection and teaches them how to use the library while eliminating any negative feeling that might be attached to a "low-literacy" collection.

Audio books are another way to get around difficulties with print. If a person will read along with the audio, that activity may even improve reading ability. Both audio books and videos may bring low-literate patrons into the library building. In some cases they will move on to reading the kind of material they enjoyed in audio. Audio books are becoming a staple of the literate community, and they can offer low-literate adults a glimpse into the literate world as well

as giving them a chance to develop meaning-level experiences with text that they cannot yet decode. Audio and video materials are already part of our collections; they only have to be pointed out to this group of patrons who may not have considered using them.

Some libraries whose new reader collections don't circulate will house new reader titles at an adult education site, as a deposit collection. They then find the collection is used there. Others rotate boxes of adult new reader materials among several class or service center sites. This does not get these potential patrons into the library, but it does put manageable reading materials in the students' hands, and keep materials that don't circulate from filling shelf space.

A variant of providing books at adult-low-literacy reading levels is to put them in places where individuals who would use them spend time. Waiting rooms, Laundromats, agency offices, and food pantries might be appropriate places. (Children's books in the same places would support family literacy.)

If a library works with a GED program, the library might consider setting up an education shelf organized by the sections of the GED. Some libraries put such a grouping in the actual GED classroom as a deposit collection, whether or not the class meets in the library. Many easy reading materials would fit nicely under social studies, science, and reading. A real issue in passing those sections of the GED is having enough background knowledge to interpret passages properly. Providing juvenile or easy reader non-fiction is a way to offer people that background knowledge while they improve their reading.

Ideas for Programming

Programming may be the most successful way to start serving low-literate adults, since the collection assumes literacy independence they may not have. Much of our library programming doesn't depend on literacy, so the literacy level of those who participate is not an issue, but it brings adults into contact with the literate world as well as the library. If we can invite low-literate adults into our space and make them comfortable there, they may become library users as well as program attendees. Libraries are a wonderful place to help adults discover a more literate world. This benefits them and it is the best thing we can do for their children.

Almost no adult who enters the world of literacy belatedly enters it alone. Almost all have a tutor, a class, or a teacher who is involved. Active library programming for newly-literate or low-literate adults will usually begin as libraries work with a facilitator who has gathered adult learners together as a class or group. Working with an adult education program, local literacy council, or other group whose clientele are likely to be low literate is probably the best way to start. Where working with adult education is possible, the library has the outlook and resources to greatly enrich the adult education experience. In other places libraries work with Head Start parents, childcare providers, social services agencies, family literacy programs, community organizations, or faith-based groups to open doors for reaching low-literate adults.

Tours of the library are a common introduction. They allow adults students to see the place, get the layout, and meet a friendly person they may recognize if they come back. Usually some

provision is arranged for getting a library card in connection with this tour. (Filling out paperwork while someone watches is a nightmare for many low-literate adults, so allowing them to fill out the applications in class or in private helps.)

Computer classes are another frequent first step. An adult group comes to the library at a scheduled time along with a teacher or facilitator to learn how to use the Internet or gain some other skill. Non-cardholders are given a chance to apply for the library card ahead of time so they can use the Internet or other library resources while they are there with the group. Once people have the card they are more likely to return independently.

Studies of literacy acquisition in adults show adults with poor decoding skills have even poorer reading comprehension. Discussing what they have read (or heard) is one of the best ways to build that comprehension. Most adult literacy students would not consider joining a book group. But a librarian who forms and moderates a book group in connection with an adult class might bring students into this way of experiencing life through books, and increase their literacy skill by showing them how to interact with text.

After a few experiences with a class book group it is possible an adult learner would come to a regular book discussion at the library. Choosing books that exist in audio format for the regular discussion groups would welcome these patrons as well as those who might have poor vision or prefer an audio format for other reasons.

Other programming possibilities may emerge. There is, for example, increased awareness of storytelling as a literacy mechanism that doesn't depend immediately on print. Offering a workshop on the mechanics of storytelling to an adult education class might help the students discover the value of words. (This in turn opens the door to easy reading material, since folk tales or ethnic tales are often retold in easily read children's books.) Inviting an adult class to a storytelling event or other library outreach program might draw low-literate adults into the possibility of library programming.

Adult reading programs and seasonal reading activities are now offered in libraries. Some libraries host activities such as adult winter reading programs, a holiday reading book group, or a mystery book club. Setting up parallel programs in the library and in an adult class or parent group might be a way to begin to draw in low-literate adults. Including such groups along with their teacher or leader in a reading program might be the introduction someone needs to begin to interact with text or come into the library independently. Choosing easy-to-read books or having audio versions available expands the possibilities for participation. A series on movie books could include books like *Tex* or *The Outsiders*, which are fairly easy reading at about a fifth grade level. A Black History Month reading emphasis could include wonderful titles available as juvenile books.

Reading and writing are two ends in the same process. Writers' programs for adult students are showing promise both for improved literacy and improved life skills. It might be possible for a library staff person to help a teacher or tutoring program start a writer's group for adult learners. Helping students dictate and then read back their experiences is a time-honored literacy method. Helping adult learners write poetry is another possibility, since free verse doesn't necessarily

involve a lots of words and formal structure but invites careful interaction with print and thoughtful use of words.

While individual interactions between patrons and staff are not usually considered programming, they can be vital. One of the difficulties of serving low-literate adults is that many of them are adept at hiding their literacy problems or don't otherwise stand out in the mass of patrons. So it is important for staff to remember that at any point they may be interacting with a patron for whom "check the OPAC" is not a helpful response. Because for most low-literate patrons, coming into the library is an act of courage and hope, and a smiling face and a few minutes of low-key individual help may make as much difference as a fancy program or a huge new reader collection. For many of these reluctant and low-literate patrons, their literacy problems began with authority figures who could have helped and didn't or "made them feel stupid." Library personnel who are helpful and affirming may help reverse earlier experiences and move these patrons in the direction of literacy.

A report on programs for adults in public library outlets, based on a survey conducted in 2000 by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education (ED), is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/frss/publications/2003010/3.asp>. The survey – which defined "programs" as planned activities for groups or individuals offered by libraries to provide information, instruction, or cultural enrichment – obtained information on three areas of interest for adult programming in public library outlets: adult literacy programs, lifelong learning programs, and provision of Internet access for adult independent use.

GED Preparation In Missouri

The GED (General Educational Development) test is a battery of five mostly multiple-choice tests covering reading, mathematics, social studies, science, and writing skills. The writing skills portion includes an essay. The exam takes about seven hours. It is the most widely accepted high school diploma alternative in the United States. The official national GED Web site is <http://www.acenet.edu/cill/ged/index.cfm>. It includes sample test items.

The GED test must be taken at official testing centers at scheduled times. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Web page notes that GED applications may be obtained at most public libraries; the application forms may be printed from http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divvoted/Forms/GED_Application.pdf. It is not possible to complete the application or pay the testing fee online. Instructions for registering to take the official GED test at an authorized center in Missouri are at http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divvoted/ged_take_the_test.htm.

Most of the instruction for GED testing Missouri is offered through classes in connection with DESE, which also runs the Adult Education program in the state. These classes are called AEL (Adult Education and Literacy) programs. A list of AEL class sites can be found at http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/acl_mo_program.htm. The State Literacy Resource Center, LIFT-Missouri, maintains an 800 number (800-729-4443), and serves as a referral to literacy and GED programs statewide. Their Web page, <http://lift-missouri.org/>, also offers a directory of programs. There are a few organized pre-GED efforts not affiliated with AEL, but AEL is the primary provider for GED preparation in the state. Some of these programs are housed in libraries and many AEL teachers or directors are open to local collaborations.

Library patrons may now be using library computers to access a Web-based GED preparation option, the GED Online Study site sponsored by DESE. Unlike commercial GED preparation programs (one of which is called GEDonline), DESE's online GED preparation class is free to Missouri residents. Missourians interested in earning a GED may find this program at <http://www.gedonlineclass.com/>. While anyone can access the site, the lessons are password protected. To obtain the password, the student must enroll in GED Online and be assigned a username and password. At this writing, a prospective student must go to an Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) class, take a free placement test to determine the starting point in the online course, and get a password. This procedure may be subject to change; the Web site for the course (<http://www.gedonlineclass.com/>) will specify the enrollment process. Without a current password from DESE, the student will not be able to access the lessons. While some students may study for the GED entirely online through this program, the GED test must still be taken at official testing centers.

There are also numerous commercial GED preparation and self-study materials commercially available through educational publishers or online. Some students combine classes with self-study from commercial materials. Some libraries choose to add these commercial preparation materials to the collection.

A Note About Reading Levels and Adult Literacy Materials

When we try to collect materials suitable for new or struggling adult readers, we need some way of indicating the difficulty of the text. Usually this is discussed in terms of reading levels. Marking reading levels is an artificial process used to indicate materials suitable for different skill levels. It is imperfect, but it does help us select materials likely to be readable for people who may still be struggling with the reading process.

All these measures are inexact because an individual's ability to read a particular text depends on many factors, including background knowledge, interest, the quality and style of the writing, format, and graphics, as well as a measured reading level. The influence of factors outside textual difficulty is even more pronounced in adults.

Reading levels are usually set by some group expectation; they usually compare readers to each other. They tell what a person in a given grade or instructional framework can be expected to read without help. Reading levels are norms arrived at in different ways. They are only somewhat standardized, in part because reading is a complex prospect.

The most common reading level indicator is grade level; that is, text considered suitable for independent reading at each grade in elementary school. There are several formulas for figuring grade levels. Different formulas sometimes yield different levels on the same text and different materials and tests may figure grade level a little differently. They are general guidelines and this is probably the system most frequently used. They are approximate when applied to adults. Adult new readers usually need text at third grade level or below.

Another reading level, Guided Reading (GR) level, measures the level at which a student can successfully read a text with some help from a teacher. This is also called the instructional reading level. (The level a student can handle without help is usually called the independent reading level.)

Since grade levels are not particularly pertinent for adult students, in adult reading circles the terms “beginning new reader,” “intermediate new reader,” and “advanced new reader” are often used. These terms are also vague, and realistically so. Similarly, terms such as “emerging reader,” “independent reader,” “advanced reader” or “struggling reader” are descriptive, but only somewhat helpful in choosing books.

Another way of measuring and indicating the difficulty of a text is the lexile measurement. Lexiles measure the difficulty of text itself. The purpose of lexiles has been to develop a system that isn't tied to elementary school expectations. Lower lexile levels are easier to read. For practical purposes, the lexile scale runs from 200 to 1700. *Goodnight Moon* has a lexile score of 250, and a lexile score of 1700 would be an advanced college textbook. Lexiles of 500-700 are probably an intermediate adult student reading level. Beginning or struggling readers usually need text with lexiles of below 500. These are admittedly not easy to find for adults.

Lists, Notes, and Sources for Building an Adult New Reader Collection

A Partial List Of Publishers:

New Readers Press

1320 Jamesville Ave., PO Box 888, Syracuse, New York 13210-0888

Phone: (800) 448-8878 Web site: <http://www.newreaderspress.com/>

Probably the largest press for adult literacy; affiliated with ProLiteracy Worldwide, the largest organized volunteer tutor organization. It also offers reference works for tutors/teachers. (ProLiteracy is the merger of Laubach Literacy and Literacy Volunteers of America.)

NTC/Contemporary Publishing Group

4255 West Touhy Avenue, Lincolnwood, Illinois 60712-1975

Phone: (847) 679-5500, or (800) 621-1918 Web site: <http://www.ntc-cb.com/home.php>

A McGraw Hill company that includes Jamestown and Contemporary publishers, with both high interest-low reading level books and classroom materials.

Lakeshore - Basics and Beyond Catalogue

2695 E. Dominguez St., PO Box 6261, Carson. CA 90749

Phone: (800) 421-5354, or (310) 537-8600 Web site: <http://www.lakeshorelearning.com/>

Lakeshore carries Steck-Vaughn materials, including a limited array of general reading materials suitable for adults at lower reading levels. Some include interpolated exercises.

Wieser Educational

30281 Esperanza Department 200, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688-2130

Phone: (800) 880-4433 Web site: http://www.wieser-ed.com/main_frame.html

Most of the materials are for children or instruction, but some may be useful in a new reader setting; carries some Steck-Vaughn and Fearon materials.

Scholastic

555 Broadway

New York, NY 10012

Phone: (212) 343-6100

Web site: <http://www.scholastic.com/>

In Missouri:

2931 East McCarty Street

Jefferson City, MO 65102

(314) 636-5271

A cost effective source of brief novels marketed for young adults, but often appropriate for adults at a medium reading level; also a few parenting materials

Chelsea House Publishers

1974 Sproul Road Ste. 400, Bromall, PA 19008-0914

Phone: (800) 362-9786 Web site: <http://www.chelseahouse.com/>

Nonfiction books for young adults and children, many of which do not look “kiddy” and might be appropriate for adult new readers as well as background knowledge for the GED.

The Brooklyn Public Library Literacy Program recommends these publishers for adult new reader collections; some also offer high-low titles for young adults.

New Readers Press:	www.newreaderspress.com/index_h.html
Avanti Books:	www.avantibooks.com/cgi-bin/avantibooks.storefront
Peppercorn Books:	www.peppercornbooks.com/frame-index.html
Oxford University Press:	www.oup-usa.com/esl
Penguin Readers:	www.penguinreaders.com
Weiser Educational:	www.wieser-ed.com/
Grass Roots Press:	www.literacyservices.com/
Teachers and Writer's Collaborative:	www.twc.org
Thomson & Heinle:	www.heinle.com
Sundance Publishers:	www.sundancepub.com
National Geographic:	www.nationalgeographic.com/education
McGraw-Hill/Contemporary:	www.mhcontemporary.com/download/catalog.php
Saddleback Educational, Inc.:	www.weofferchoices.com/
Dorling Kindersley Publishing:	www.dk.com/
American Library Association:	www.alastore.ala.org
International Reading Association:	www.reading.org
Storyline Press:	www.storylinepress.com

The Brooklyn Public Library also recommends these Web sites for collection development, with adult literacy in mind:

<http://bones.med.ohio-state.edu/staff/mweibel/picturehistory.newsletter.html>
<http://www.vpl.vancouver.bc.ca/branches/LibrarySquare/lit/leisure.html>
<http://archon.educ.kent.edu/Oasis/Resc/Trade/index.html>
<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists/>

*Source: Erna Golde, Education Coordinator
Brooklyn Public Library Literacy Program, 431 Sixth Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215*

Cyndy Colletti, Illinois State Library, offers these suggestions for finding material for adult new readers:

Choosing and Using Books with Adult New Readers, by M. Weibel.
<http://bones.med.ohio-state.edu/staff/mweibel/picturehistory.newsletter.html>

Leisure Books for Adult New Readers, Vancouver Public Library.
<http://www.vpl.vancouver.bc.ca/branches/LibrarySquare/lit/leisure.html>

Recommended Trade Books for Adult Literacy Programs: Annotated Bibliographies with Teaching Suggestions; Ohio Literacy Resource Center, Compiled by Patricia L. Bloem, Nancy D. Padak, and Connie Sapin.
<http://archon.educ.kent.edu/Oasis/Resc/Trade/index.html>

PLA (Public Library Association) publishes “the best of” list for new reader books from a variety of publishers every few years. Many are not at the lowest reading levels, but they will suggest a core for a new reader collection. Lists for 1998 and 2000 are printed in this handbook, and can also be found at <http://archive.pla.org/resources/newreader.html>.

Notes

Some books sold for the juvenile market are also good candidates for the adult new reader collection. Educational publishing houses often sell trade books marked with a reading level; the lower the easier, and in other ways vendors may mark some titles as easier to read than others. Once an adult has a reading level roughly corresponding to fourth grade, the options greatly increase. An individual's ability to read a particular book depends on many factors, including background knowledge, interest in the subject, the clarity and quality of the writing, illustrations, and even format, as well as a measured reading level and vocabulary. Some of the same principles for choosing literacy-friendly materials for young adults apply to adult new reader collections. Although they must often be chosen title by title, some young adult novels and nonfiction books are manageable and interesting for low-literate adults. For example, two juvenile titles that have been filmed for TV, *Sarah Plain and Tall* and *Tuck Everlasting*, have grade level equivalents of about 3rd and 5th grade respectively. (This points out that the current educational system expects a rather high literacy level by third grade.) The YALSA (Young Adult Library Services Association) booklists feature award-winning books chosen by members of ALA. The Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers often offers good possibilities for adult new readers (<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists/>).

Some juvenile science series and biographies have the library advantage of serving more than one kind of patron. If the budget and organization system permit, having copies of some books shelved in both the youth area and the adult area might make them accessible to new readers. Children's books are increasingly books for all ages and all situations. Shelving a few in an adult area might introduce some adults at all reading levels to the wonder of children's literature. Parenting is a wonderful and commonly used excuse to get adults to read children's books at the reading level they need. Children's literature is also a rich font of ethnic experience well told.

Some organizations offer easy reading material on topics like parenting or job seeking. Literacy programs are increasingly printing collections of student essays and narratives; they usually have to be obtained one at a time from programs (usually found on the Web) but they might fill a gap in the collection. Adult education organizations are also producing collected writings from people in their own programs. Well-chosen poetry, especially the modern free-verse kind, may be readable when prose at the same “reading level” is too difficult. Suitable poetry would be brief and concentrate on meaning, rather than long narratives or details. Poetry also expresses the kinds of emotional exploration that often comes with the experience of returning to a literacy program as an adult. (Newberry winner *Out of the Dust*, for example, contains deep themes and issues, especially for women, at about a fifth grade reading level.)

Once we have the books, we have the issue of getting the low-literate patron and the books connected. Pro-Literacy Worldwide, the major adult education group, advises grouping low-reading-level adult materials together in a conveniently located new reader collection. This is intended to spare these patrons the discomfort of having to ask a lot of questions, draw attention to themselves, use signage frustrating for them, lose time trying to sort out what they can use, fail with the OPAC, and negotiate an unfamiliar situation. The grouped collection is the most common way to handle materials for low-literate adults. Some librarians report problems with it, including the reluctance of some adults to be seen at the New Reader shelf. A partial solution is to put the shelf in a convenient but not highly visible place, and carefully choose the name of this collection. Titles like “Continuing Education,” “Quick Books for Busy People,” “Easy Reads,” “Literacy Collection,” or a local reference like “Ms. Linda’s Picks” are often suggested.

No matter how we handle an adult new reader collection, most low literate adults aren’t used to the idea that reading books can be part of daily life and the collection probably will not circulate like other collections do. A library that chooses to have adult new reader material does so out of a sense of service, not statistics. But if we are really interested in serving our total communities and changing the literacy situation in Missouri, the investment has possibility and promise.

2000 PLA Top Titles for Adult New Readers

The Resources for Adult New Readers Committee of PLA's Library Services Cluster is pleased to offer its list of Top Titles for Adult New Readers. The booklist is meant to recognize such titles and to encourage the availability of materials for the adult new reader. Books chosen for the list demonstrate high appeal in terms of content, format and illustration. Titles are eighth grade reading level or below on the Fry Readability Scale. The books listed were published primarily in 2000. We encourage you to duplicate, distribute, and share this bibliography.

***Baseball.* By James Kelley.** Eyewitness Books, Dorling Kindersley, 2000. Fry Reading Level 7. ISBN 0789452413, \$15.95. Celebrate America's national pastime in pictures; the history, the heroes, the gear, and the games. Everything you ever wanted to know, from how a diamond is laid out to how a mitt is constructed is in this volume. Lavishly illustrated with photos.

***Big Book of Cars.* By Trevor Lord.** Dorling Kindersley, 1999. Fry Reading Level 7. ISBN 078944738x, \$14.95. Huge, colorful photos illustrate the details of 13 amazing cars from the pink Cadillac of the 1950s to futuristic cars on the drawing boards.

***Girls' Guide to Hunting and Fishing.* By Melissa Bank.** Viking, 1999. Fry Reading Level 6. ISBN 0140293248, \$12.95. This funny novel, set in New York City, follows Jane Rosenthal's search for love and happiness. Appealing to women who have ever looked for "Mr. Right."

***Katie.com: My Story.* By Katherine Tarbox.** Dutton, 2000. Fry Reading Level 6. ISBN 0525945431, \$19.95. A lonely, alienated teen finds a whole new social scene online. Through e-mail messages, she falls in love for the first time. But when they meet, her dream man is actually a middle-aged pedophile.

***The Monster Stick & Other Appalachian Tale Tales.* By Paul & Bil Lepp.** August House, 1999. Fry Reading Level 3.7. ISBN 0974835771, \$9.95. A collection of outrageous original tales about weather, fish, hunting, politics, and education. The clever, whimsical art of the book design reels the reader into the Lepp Mountain Tall Tales.

***Wake of the Perdido Star.* By Gene Hackman and Daniel Henihan.** New Market Press, 1999. Fry Reading Level 6. ISBN 1557043981, \$24.95. Set in the years 1805-1808, this sea adventure depicts the life of Jack O'Reilly, sailor and renegade obsessed with revenging the murder of his parents. Includes fascinating descriptions of early 19th century salvage operations.

They Were My Friends. Oakland Readers Health Project. Fry Reading level 1-2. ISBN 1-928836-03-8, \$10.

I Could Leap Through a Cheerio. Oakland Readers Health Project. Fry Reading level 3-4. ISBN 1-928836-04-6 \$10

Quest for Life: The Search Deep within Your Soul to Find Your True Inner Spirit and Reason for Being. Women of Oakland. Fry Reading Level 1-2. ISBN 1-98836-05-4, \$10.

Proclamation of Independence: Announcement of Personal Freedom and Total Self-Reliance, the Declaration That You Are an Individual of Worth and Value. Women of Oakland. Fry Reading Level 3-4. ISBN 1-928836-06-2, \$10.

These four titles are life stories told by students in the Oakland Public Library's Second Start Adult Literacy Program. The two series of oral histories, Oakland Readers Health Project and the Women of Oakland, consist of two readers, each reader containing edited student interviews. Besides student stories, the volumes include follow up questions and photographs of the authors. All were published in 1999 and are available through Peppercorn Books.

The Jack Sloan Series by Agnes M. Hagen: New Readers Press, 2001. Fry Reading Level 3. ISBN 1-56853-048-X; 049-8; 050-1; 051-X. Also available from Peppercorn Books.

Tin Star Promise.

Justice on Horseback.

Shotgun Revenge.

Mississippi Stranger.

Jack Sloan is the hero of this four volume series set on the Texas frontier. When his wife is killed by outlaws and his young son abducted, Sloan tracks down the killers and brings them to justice. His reward is being made Sheriff. Further adventures, love, intrigue and excitement are found in the other three titles.

Johannes Gutenberg. By Betty Lou Kratoville. High Noon Books, 2000. Fry Reading Level 2. ISBN 1571281428. Price: check with publisher. Overcoming many obstacles, Johannes Gutenberg pursued his dream of developing the printing press and changed the world. Interesting brief overview of the history of books.

The Wright Brothers. By Betty Lou Kratoville. High Noon Books, 2000. Fry Reading Level 2. ISBN 1571281452. The Wright Brothers' interest in flight, which led to the first powered flight, inspires readers to achieve their own dreams. Illustrated with black and white photographs.

These two titles are part of the Problem Solvers Biographies Series. Of the five titles, these were selected because the more sophisticated illustrations would appeal to adults.

1999 Top Titles for Adult New Readers

Out of the Dust. By Karen Hesse. Scholastic press, 1997. Hardcover, \$15.95 (ISBN 0-590-36080-9). A moving account of a girl's life in the Dust Bowl during the 1930's. A great candidate for read-aloud and read-along. Reading level 5-8.

And Not Afraid to Dare: The Stories of Ten African-American Women. By Tonya Bolden. Scholastic Press, 1998. Hardcover, \$16.95 (ISBN 0-590-48080-4). Present and past African-American women are brought to life. Stresses self-esteem and goal-setting. Reading level 8+. May be challenging for some readers.

Baby Help. By Marilyn Reynolds. Morning Glory Press, 1998. Softcover, \$8.95 (ISBN 1-88536-27-7). Covers problems of spousal abuse and shelter living from the teenage angle. Material for all ages. Fictionalized account. Reading level 6.

***Celestial River: Creation Tales of the Milky Way.* By Andrea Stenn Stryer.** August House Publishers, 1998. Hardcover \$14.95 (ISBN 0-87483-529-1). Creation tales feature Japanese, Greek, Maori, Navajo, and other world tales. Excellent for read-aloud and read along. Reading level 5–8.

***Greek Myths Western Style: Toga Tales with an Attitude.* By Barbara McBride-Smith.** August House Publishers, 1998. Hardcover, \$14.95 (ISBN 0-87483-524-0). Read-aloud and discussion versions of classic Greek tales for the new reader. Reading level 7–9.

***They Never Gave Up: Adventures in Early Aviation.* By Michael Wilkey.** Orca Book Publishers, 1998. Softcover, \$9.95 (ISBN 1-55143-092-4). History of early aviation is covered from Icarus to modern beginnings, including both men and women flyers. Easy to break down into segments. Reading level 6+.

***Women of Hope: African Americans Who Made a Difference.* By Joyce Hansen.** Scholastic Press, 1998. Hardcover, \$16.95 (ISBN 0-590- 93973-4). Biographical sketches plus portraits of African-American women trailblazers. Good format and photos. Reading level 6–8+.

Job Skills Series. From Capstone High/ Low Books, 1998.

***Communicating with Others.* By Stuart Schwartz and Craig Conley.** Hardcover \$19 (ISBN 1-56065-716-2).

***Working as a Team.* By Stuart Schwartz and Craig Conley.** Hardcover \$19 (ISBN 1-56065-718-9). These books offer succinct information on life skills necessary for getting and keeping a job. Glossary, addresses, Web sites, and bibliography. Reading level 8+.

Look at Work Series. From Capstone High/Low Books, 1998.

***Exploring Job Skills.* By Stuart Schwartz and Craig Conley.** Hardcover, \$14.25 (ISBN 1-56065-712-X).

***Interviewing for a Job.* By Stuart Schwartz and Craig Conley.** Hardcover \$19 (ISBN 1-56065-714-6).

Brief And Useful Tips For The Adult Job Seeker. Easy to read and use; good for English as a Second Language readers. Reading level 8+. May be challenging for some readers.

Streamlined Shakespeare Series. From Academic Therapy Publications, High Noon Books Division, 1999.

***Merchant of Venice.* Adapted by Peggy L. Anderson and Judith D. Anderson.** Softcover, \$7 (ISBN 1-57128-123-1).

***Romeo and Juliet.* Adapted by Peggy L. Anderson and Judith D. Anderson.** Softcover, \$7 (ISBN 1-57128-124-X). This attractive series includes both narrative adaptations of the stories and easy-to-follow adaptations of the plays. Includes brief biography of Shakespeare, a history of the Globe Theater, and well-known quotations from the plays. Reading level 4+.

Teen Parenting Skills Series. From Morning Glory Press, 1998.

***Discipline from Birth to Three.* By Jeanne Lindsay and Sally McCullough.** Softcover, \$12.95 (ISBN 1-885356- 36-6).

***Your Baby's First Year.* By Jeanne Warren Lindsay.** Softcover, \$12.95 (ISBN 1-885356-33-1); hardcover, \$18.95 (1-885356-32-3).

***Your Pregnancy and Newborn Journey.* By Jeanne Warren Lindsay and Jean Burnelli.** Softcover, \$12.95 (ISBN 1-885356-30-7); Hardcover, \$18-95 (ISBN1-885356-29-3). Good mix of child development and practical parenting information. Easy to locate examples. Reading level 6–8+.

1998 Top Titles for Adult New Readers

***Getting to Know Computers.* By Mary Beth Lundgren.** Cleveland, OH; Project Learn, 1997. Writers Group Books Series. Fry Reading Level 3. \$8.50. Excellent book that is available in both a controlled vocabulary version for new readers and a generic version for those who are computer illiterate. A keyboard insert makes understanding easier. Clear explanations of computer terms told in a non-threatening manner. Excellent for ESL.

***Heartwood.* By Nikky Finney.** Lexington, KY; University Press of Kentucky, 1997. New Books for New Readers Series, Kentucky Humanities Council. Fry Reading Level 5+. \$4.50 (ISBN 0-8131-09108). Hurtful racial words somehow help two small town Kentucky women, one black and one white, discover their fears and prejudices and become friends. Told from several perspectives with characters that are real and likable.

Recommended Single Titles

***Africatrek.* By Dan Buetner.** Minneapolis, MN; Lerner, 1997. Fry Reading Level 8+. \$17.95 (ISBN 0-8225-2951-3). Eye-catching, colorful oversize book with map, glossary, and pronunciation guide follows a bicycle trek 11,855 miles across Africa. A modern true-life adventure. Useful for ESL.

***Andre Agassi: Reaching the Top Again.* By Jeff Savage.** Minneapolis, MN; Lerner, 1997. Sports Achiever Series. Fry Reading Level 8+. hardcover \$14.95 (ISBN 0-8225-2894-0); paper \$5.95 (ISBN 0-8225-9750-0). Biography of the tennis star who was on top once and is working hard to reclaim that status. Showcases determination.

***Anfernee Hardaway: Basketball's Lucky Penny.* By Brad Townsend.** Minneapolis, MN; Lerner, 1997. Sports Achievers Series. Fry Reading Level 8+. Hardcover \$14.95 (ISBN 0-8225-3652-8); paper \$5.95 (ISBN 0-8225-9766-7). Hardaway overcame poor grades, suspect friends, and a gunshot wound to become one of the most charismatic basketball players of this era. His strict grandmother provided the basis for his character and determination.

***A Bosnian Family.* By Robin Landeau Silverman.** Minneapolis, MN; Lerner, 1997. Journey Between Two Worlds Series. Fry Reading Level 7. Hardcover \$16.95 (ISBN 0-8225-3404-5). A real life story of a Bosnian family relocated into the heartland of America. Poignant and forceful look at the differences in cultures as well as the similarities. Describes the Muslim life. Pronunciation guide, maps.

***Carmine's Story.* By Arlene Schulman.** Minneapolis, MN; Lerner, 1997. Fry Reading Level 5. Hardcover \$15.95 (ISBN 0-8225-2582-8). Extremely moving account of a ten-year-old AIDS patient. Told in first person. Bibliography, resource listings, excellent glossary. The boy died shortly before the book was completed.

***Denzel Washington.* By Alex Simmons.** Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1997. Contemporary African Americans Series. Fry Reading Level 4–6. Hardcover \$24.26 (ISBN 0-8172-3986-3). A biography of a role model for all, not just African Americans. Actor, humanitarian, family man. Easy to read with excellent illustrations and good size print. Glossary and color illustrations.

***East African Folktales.* By Vincent Muliwa Kituku.** Little Rock, AR; August House, 1997. World Storytelling Series. Fry Reading Level 8+. Trade paper \$9.95 (ISBN 0-8748-3489-9). Collection of short, simple East African morality tales that can be read aloud or told. Tales are told in both English and Kamba.

***Edward James Olmos.* By Louis Carrillo.** Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1997. Contemporary Hispanic Americans Series. Fry Reading Level 4–6. Hardcover \$24.26 (ISBN 0-8172-39899-8). Olmos, an icon and role model for many Mexican Americans, is portrayed in this biography. Covers his charitable and theatrical work. Color illustrations as well as easy-to-read print.

***Ferrets.* By Sylvia A. Johnson.** Minneapolis, MN; Carolrhoda Books, 1997. Fry Reading Level 5–7. Hardcover \$14.95 (ISBN 0-57505-014-5) Easy-to-read, color and black-and-white illustrations about ferrets, an animal people are now keeping as pets.

***A Friend In Need.* By Sonja Massie.** Syracuse, NY; Signal Hill Publications, 1997. Janet Dailey's Love Scenes Series. Fry Reading Level 3–5. Paper \$3.50 (ISBN 1-55853-028-5). Adult interest romance with a very low reading level. A lonely man and an independent but needy lady can only spell romance. Love, hope, and a happy ending.

***Heaven Sent.* By Nina K. Bette.** Syracuse, NY; Signal Hill Publications, 1997. Janet Dailey's Love Scenes Series. Fry Reading Level 3–5. Paper \$3.50 (ISBN 1-56853-030-7). Adult interest romance guaranteed to appeal to the female adult new reader, particularly those who like stories that include the ever-popular angels. Easy-to-read story about an angel who wins her stripes by helping a young woman find love.

***If Sarah Will Take Me.* By Dane Bauchard.** Custer, WA; Orca Books, 1997. Fry Reading Level 6. Hardcover \$16.95 (ISBN 1-55143-081-9). This well-made book with lovely illustrations will touch the hearts of readers. Moving words and concepts tell of a young male paraplegic whose nurse becomes his wife. Family Literacy and ESL.

***LaDonna Harris.* By Michael Schwartz.** Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1997. Contemporary Native Americans Series. Fry Reading Level 4–6. Hardcover \$24.26 (ISBN 0-8172-3995-2). Well written with excellent photos. Biography of a Comanche-Irish woman, ex-

wife of an United States senator, working for the rights of Native Americans and women. Multicultural use.

***The Lady and the Cowboy.* By Christine Anne Wenger.** Syracuse, NY; Signal Hill Publications. Janet Dailey's Love Scenes Series. Fry Reading Level 3–5. Paper \$3.50 (ISBN 1-56853-029-3). In this high interest/low reading level romance novel set in the 1880's, a young woman returns to her home in Wyoming to discover her father has died and left the homestead to a handsome neighbor. Mass market format makes these romances attractive for adult new readers.

***Lyn St. James: Driven to Be First.* By Russ Olney.** Minneapolis, MN; Lerner, 1997. The Achievers Series. Fry Reading Level 7+. Hardcover \$14.95 (ISBN 0-8225-3890-8); paper \$5.95 (ISBN 0-8225-9749-7). Taught by her mother to drive, and helped with mechanics by her father, this racing champion and mold breaker was a rookie of the year at the world famous Indianapolis 500 auto race. Excellent photographs. For all race fans.

***The Magic of Love.* By Alyssa Logan.** Syracuse, NY; Signal Hill Publications, 1997. Janet Dailey's Love Scenes Series. Fry Reading Level 3–5. Paper \$3.50 (ISBN 1-56853-031-5). Mass-market size plus high interest/low reading level make this light romance attractive to adult new readers. The clown and the single mom/businessperson find love and happiness. Clowning around has a happy ending for young—and old.

***Marilyn Monroe: Norma Jeane's Dream.* By Katherine E. Krohn.** Minneapolis, MN; Lerner, 1997. Newsmaker Biography Series. Fry Reading Level 7. Hardcover \$16.95 (ISBN 0-8225-4930-1). Index includes films; bibliography includes books, magazines, and newspaper articles. A short, non-speculative biography of the tragic Hollywood icon, Marilyn Monroe.

***Maya Lin.* By Bettina Ling.** Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1997. Contemporary Asian Americans Series. Fry Reading Level 4–6. Hardcover \$19.95 (ISBN 0-8172-3992-8). Well-written and easy-to-read biography of a Japanese-American citizen who designed the Vietnam Wall as well as other memorials. The Ohio-born artist is a role model for perseverance against prejudice of all types. Useful for ESL.

***Nely Galan.* By Janet Rodriguez.** Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1997. Contemporary Hispanic Americans Series. Fry Reading Level 4–6. Hardcover \$24.26 (ISBN 0-8172-3991-X). Very readable and well illustrated. ESL tutors as well as mainstream literacy programs will find uses for this biography which highlights the life and success of a talented young woman of Cuban ancestry who used television to learn English, and became an entrepreneur in television and the show business world.

***On the Way to Over the Hill.* By Grace Lee.** Seattle, WA; EduCare Press, 1997. Fry Reading Level 8+. Paper \$12.95 (ISBN 0-944638-11-2). Essays and separate collected pieces of the newspaper columns of the refreshingly candid Lee, who doesn't seem over the hill at age 72. Feisty and without guile, this work will appeal to the older new reader who is willing to stretch her reading prowess. Can be read in bits and pieces. Vocabulary and reading level on the high end but well worth the effort.

***Orphan Trains to Missouri.* By Michael D. Patrick and Evelyn Goodrich Trickel.** Columbia, MO; University of Missouri Press, 1997. Missouri Heritage Series. Fry Reading Level 6+. Paper \$9.95 (ISBN 0-8262-1121-6). High-end level for adult new readers, of particular interest to New York and Midwestern readers. Tales of children who were taken willingly and unwillingly from the eastern cities and relocated with families out west. Some were welcomed as family members; others, as cheap labor.

***Paper Airplanes to Build and Fly.* By Emery Kelly.** Minneapolis, MN; Lerner, 1997. Fry Reading 8+. (ISBN 0-8225-2401-5). Another high-end reading level book for the hobbyist and those who have kids at home or who are still kids at heart themselves. Great for do-it-together family literacy. Patterns for 12 planes that really fly included. Fun way to learn about aerodynamics.

***People of China and Their Food.* By Ann L. Burckhardt.** Mankato, MN; Capstone, 1996. Multicultural Cookbook Series. Fry Reading Level 3–4. Hardcover \$14.25 (ISBN 1-56065-3). Color-filled. Kitchen safety section included. Recipes use commonly available food. Explains a bit about the customs and holidays of the country. Useful for ESL as well as family literacy and for culturally diverse settings.

***People of Mexico and Their Food.* By Ann L. Burckhardt.** Mankato, MN; Capstone, 1997. Multicultural Cookbook Series. Fry Reading Level 3–4. Hardcover \$14.25 (ISBN 1-56065-432-5). A wonderful introduction to Mexico, this cookbook gives detailed recipes for popular Mexican cuisine. Easy to find ingredients. Mouthwatering color pictures. ESL and family literacy uses.

***People of Russia and Their Food.* By Ann L. Burckhardt.** Mankato, MN; Capstone, 1996. Multicultural Cookbook Series. Fry Reading Level 3–4. Hardcover \$14.25 (ISBN 1-56065-435-X). Color filled; metric measures included. Notes the demise of the Soviet Union. Available ingredients used. Good recipes to make with the entire family. Excellent way to learn about other cultures. ESL and family literacy uses.

***Revolutionary Poet: The Story of Phillis Wheatley.* By Maryann Weidt.** Minneapolis, MN; Carolrhoda Books, 1997. Creative Minds Series. Fry Reading Level 6+. Hardcover \$14.95 (ISBN 1-57505-087-4); paper \$5.95 (ISBN 1-57505-059-5). Tells of a very gifted woman, a free Negro in colonial America, whose life in Boston provided fodder for her poetry that lives today. Gives a look at slavery in early America. Bibliography, well indexed. Black-and-white drawings enhance the story.

***Scottie Pippen: Reluctant Superstar.* By Robert Schnakenberg.** Minneapolis, MN; Lerner, 1997. Sports Achievers Series. Fry Reading Level 7+. Hardcover \$14.95 (ISBN 0-8225-3653-6); paper \$5.95 (ISBN 0-8225-9767-5). Current to end of 1996 year. Career highlights included. Color photographs. Brief but telling look at the personal and professional life of a basketball star. Covers Pippen's exploits in college, the Olympics, and the pros.

Seiji Ozawa. By Sheri Tan. Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1997. Contemporary Asian Americans Series. Fry Reading Level 4–6. Hardcover \$19.95 (ISBN 8172-3993-6). Famed conductor of the Boston Symphony. Born to Japanese parents, lived in China, went to Japan when he was nine, and became an American citizen in 1966. Tells of his life in China, Japan, and the United States. Truly multicultural. Excellent for ESL.

***Teddy Bears.* By Arlene Ehrbach.** Minneapolis, MN; Carolrhoda Books. Household History Series. Fry Reading Level 7+. Hardcover \$16.95 (ISBN 1-5705-019-6); paper \$7.95 (ISBN 1-5705-222-9). For arctophiles (bear lovers) of all ages. History and background of the teddy bear in America and the world. Glossary, bibliography, and lots of illustrations in both color and black and white.

***Toni Morrison.* By Diane Patrick-Wexler.** Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1997. Contemporary African Americans Series. Fry Reading Level 4–6. Hardcover \$16.95 (ISBN 0-8172-398-3). Life of the talented African-American writer whose work has been awarded the Nobel and Pulitzer Prizes.

***Wynton Marsalis.* By Veronica Freeman.** Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1997. Contemporary African Americans Series. Fry Reading Level 4–6. Hardcover \$24.26 (ISBN 0-8172-3988-X). An inspiring biography of a highly successful black musician. Stresses family ties. Covers personal as well as professional life. Color illustration, bibliography, and glossary.

FYI. Syracuse, NY; Signal Hill, 1997. For Your Information Series. Fry Reading Level 3–5. Paper \$8.95 each.

Control Your Money. (ISBN 1-56953-033-1).

Get That Job. (ISBN 1-56853-035-8).

Having A Baby. (ISBN 1-56853-032-3).

Women's Health (ISBN 1-56853-034-X).

These books are chock-full of easy-to-read information written expressly for adult new readers. Financial planning and management made understandable; a step-by-step guide to job hunting; a guide to a healthy pregnancy for the baby, the mother, and the rest of the family; a concise, informative, and non-judgmental look at the physical, mental, and sexual health of women.

***Who's That in the White House.* By Rose Blue and Corinne J. Nader.** Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1998. Fry Reading Level 6+. Hardcover \$27.83 each.

The Expansion Years: Buchanan to McKinley. (ISBN 0-8172-4302-X).

The Formative Years: Jackson to Pierce. (ISBN 0-8172-4301-1).

The Founding Years: Washington to J. Q. Adams. (ISBN 0-8172-4300-3).

The Modern Years: Nixon to Clinton. (ISBN 0-8172-4305-4).

The Progressive Years: T. Roosevelt to Hoover. (ISBN 0-8172-4303-8).

The Turbulent Years: F. Roosevelt to Johnson. (ISBN 0-8172-4304-6).

Covers each administration from George Washington to Bill Clinton. Includes lively writing and something positive to report about each president. Excellent maps, glossaries, and indexes. Contains physical descriptions of the presidents, political history, and includes other important historical figures. Well illustrated. Recommended for ESL.

Atlas of . . . Series. Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1997. Fry Reading Level 6+. Hardcover \$32.83 each.

Atlas of the Rain Forests. By Anna Lewington. (ISBN 0-8172-4756-4).

Atlas of Threatened Cultures. By Paul Mason. (ISBN 0-8172-4755-6).

Oversize format with lots of color illustrations including maps. Excellent bibliographies for all age groups. Shows how rain forests are vital to the survival of the earth as we know it. The atlas for threatened cultures has a people page and a continent page to better present information about the state of people all over the world.

Capstone Short Biography Series. Mankato, MN; Capstone, 1997. Fry Reading Level 3–4. \$14.25 each.

Women Explorers in Africa. By Margo McLoone. (ISBN 1-56065-505-4).

Women Explorers in Asia. By Margo McLoone. (ISBN 1-56065-506-2).

Women Explorers in North and South America. By Margo McLoone. (ISBN 1-56065-507-1).

Women Explorers in the Polar Regions. By Margo McLoone. (ISBN 1-56065-508-9).

Brief biographical sketches of 19th- and 20th-century women who were adventurous and independent. Photo illustrated. Good for building self-esteem.

Shared Umbrella Series. by Jan Goethel. Eau Claire, WI; Chippewa Valley Publishing, 1997. Fry Reading Level 1+. Paper, \$16.00 per set.

Carmen's Day.

Go To Work, Fred!

A Holiday for Me.

Low-level reading/high interest stories of work and family especially for the adult new reader and those new to America. Amusing and complimentary cartoon-like drawings.

Treasure Hunters Series. Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1998. Fry Reading Level 4+. Hardcover \$24.97 each.

The Search for Gold. By Nicola Barber. (ISBN 0-8172-4837-4).

The Search for Lost Cities. By Nicola Barber. (ISBN 0-8172-4840-4).

The Search for Sunken Treasure. By Nicola Barber and Anita Ganeri. (ISBN 0-8172-4838-8).

The Search for Tombs. By Anita Ganeri. (ISBN 0-8172-4839-0).

Attractive and colorful format with a good mix of illustrations and photographs. The armchair adventurer can look for the Titanic, lost cities on five continents, and gold the world over.

Explore graves and tombs and see if there are really cursed ones. Books can be read piecemeal.

The Untamed World Series. Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1998. Fry Reading Level 6–8. \$26.24 each.

Alligators/Crocodiles. By Karen Dudley. (ISBN 0-8172-4573-1).

Bald Eagles. By Karen Dudley. (ISBN 0-8172-4571-5).

Black Rhinos. By E. Melanie Watt. (ISBN 0-8172-4572-3).

Blue Whales. By Patricia Miller Schroeder. (ISBN 0-8172-4570-7).

Elephants. By Karen Dudley. (ISBN 0-8172-4565-0).

Giant Pandas. By Karen Dudley. (ISBN 0-8172-4566-9).

Gorillas. By Patricia Miller Schroeder. (ISBN 0-8172-4562-6).

Great White Sharks. By Marie Levine. (ISBN 0-8172-4560-3).

***Grizzly Bears.* By Janice Packer.** (ISBN 0-8172-4563-4).

***Jaguars.* By E. Melanie Watt.** (ISBN 0-8172-4568-5).

***Whooping Cranes.* By Karen Dudley.** (ISBN 0-8172-4564-2).

***Wolves.* by Karen Dudley.** (ISBN 0-8172-4561-8).

Unique combination of science and biology, legends and literary allusions, environment, conservation, and history. Each book has sections for twenty interesting facts, a good mix of illustrations and photos, and is well indexed. Every work in the series contains maps, and provides different points of view as well as good addresses for more information. Excellent treatment of the material.

***World in the Time of . . . Series.* By Fiona Macdonald.** Parsippany, NJ; Silver Burdett Press, 1997. Fry Reading Level 4+. Hardcover \$19.95 each; paper \$9.95 each.

World in the Time of Abraham Lincoln. (ISBN 0-382-39745-2); paper (ISBN 0-382-39744-4).

World in the Time of Alexander the Great. (ISBN 0-382-39743-6); paper (ISBN 0-382-39742-7).

World in the Time of Marco Polo. (ISBN 0-382-39749-5)paper (ISBN 0-382-39748-7).

World in the Time of Tutankhamen. (ISBN 0-382-39747-9) paper (ISBN 0-382-39476-0).

Beautiful illustrations enhance these borderline reference books that give a worldview of history during a particular era. Excellent timelines. Maps and charts, good glossaries.

Missouri Heritage Readers

Since 1994, the University of Missouri Press has been publishing a series of books targeted to adult new readers called the Missouri Heritage Reader Series. Each book explores a particular aspect of the state's rich cultural heritage. Focusing on people, places, historical events, and the details of daily life, these books illustrate the ways in which people from all parts of the world contributed to the development of the state and the region. The books incorporate documentary and oral history, folklore, and informal literature in a way that makes these resources accessible to all Missourians.

Even though they're intended primarily for adult new readers, the Missouri Heritage Readers Series are invaluable to readers of all ages interested in the cultural and social history of Missouri. Rebecca B. Schroeder is the general editor for all 19 editions. To order, contact:

University of Missouri Press (www.umsystem.edu/upress/)

2910 LeMone Blvd., Columbia, MO 65201

Phone 573-882-7641

Fax 573-884-4498

Comments, inquiries, and catalog requests: upress@umsystem.edu

Order department: 800-828-1894 OR orders@umsystem.edu

Arrow Rock: The Story of a Missouri Village, by Authorene Wilson Phillips. Arrow Rock, so named because Native Americans once went there to shape their arrowheads from the flint found along the Missouri River, is a small historic village. Today fewer than one hundred people call Arrow Rock home, but its scenic location and rich history continue to attract thousands of visitors every year. *Arrow Rock: The Story of a Missouri Village* provides insight into the progression of history and its effects on one small Missouri town.

Blind Boone: Missouri's Ragtime Pioneer, by Jack A. Batterson. Often overlooked by ragtime historians, John William "Blind" Boone had a remarkably successful and influential music career that endured for almost fifty years. *Blind Boone: Missouri's Ragtime Pioneer* provides the first full account of the Missouri-born musician's amazing story of overcoming the odds.

Called to Courage: Four Women in Missouri History, by Margot Ford McMillen and Heather Roberson. While there are many accessible biographies of important Missouri men, there are few such biographies of Missouri women. This book, written by a mother-and-daughter team, traces the lives of four women who played important roles in their eras. These women were exceptional because they had the courage to make the best of their abilities, forging trails and breaking the barriers that separated women's spheres from those of men. Featured in the book are "Ignon Quaconisen," a Native American woman who lived during the 1700s; Olive Boone, wife of Nathan Boone; Martha Jane Chisley, a former slave whose son became the first nationally known African American priest; and Nell Donnelly, a Kansas City businesswoman.

Catfish, Fiddles, Mules, and More: Missouri's State Symbols, by John C. Fisher. Throughout history symbols have been used in a variety of ways, often playing important roles. Each state has its own representative symbols – ranging from seals, flags, and buildings to rocks, minerals,

plants, and animals – but how did they come to be chosen? In *Catfish, Fiddles, Mules, and More*, John C. Fisher provides an answer to that question for Missourians with a handy reference on the various official symbols of the state.

Food in Missouri: A Cultural Stew by Madeline Matson. Corn, squash, and beans from the Native Americans; barbecue sauces from the Spanish; potatoes and sausages from the Germans: Missouri's foods include a bountiful variety of ingredients. In *Food in Missouri: A Cultural Stew*, Madeline Matson takes readers on an enticing journey through the history of this state's food, from the hunting and farming methods of the area's earliest inhabitants, through the contributions of the state's substantial African American population, to the fast-food purveyors of the microwave age.

George Caleb Bingham: Missouri's Famed Painter and Forgotten Politician, by Paul Nagel. In this fascinating work, Paul Nagel tells the full story of George Caleb Bingham, one of America's greatest nineteenth-century painters. While Nagel assesses Bingham's artistic achievements, he also portrays another and very important part of the artist's career – his service as a statesman and political leader in Missouri

German Settlement in Missouri: New Land, Old Ways, by Robyn K. Burnett and Ken Luebbering. German immigrants came to America for two main reasons: to seek opportunities in the New World, and to avoid political and economic problems in Europe. In *German Settlement in Missouri*, Robyn Burnett and Ken Luebbering demonstrate the crucial role that the German immigrants and their descendants played in the settlement and development of Missouri's architectural, political, religious, economic, and social landscape. Relying heavily on unpublished memoirs, letters, diaries, and official records, the authors provide important new narratives and firsthand commentary from the immigrants themselves.

Hoecakes, Hambone, and All That Jazz: African American Traditions in Missouri, by Rose M. Nolen. Many African Americans in Missouri are the descendants of slaves brought by the French or the Spanish to the Louisiana Territory in the 1700s or by Americans who moved from slave states after the Louisiana Purchase in the 1800s. In *Hoecakes, Hambone, and All That Jazz*, Rose M. Nolen explores the ways in which those Missouri "immigrants with a difference" – along with other Africans brought to America against their will – developed cultural, musical, and religious traditions that allowed them to retain customs from their past while adapting to the circumstances of the present.

Immigrant Women in the Settlement of Missouri, by Robyn Burnett and Ken Luebbering. The authors first looked at how immigration has affected Missouri's cultural landscape in their book, *German Settlement in Missouri: New Land, Old Ways*. Now they tell the stories of women from all across Europe who left the Old World for Missouri. Drawing heavily on the women's own stories, *Immigrant Women in the Settlement of Missouri* illustrates common elements of their lives without minimizing the diversity and complexity of each individual's experience.

Into the Spotlight: Four Missouri Women, by Margot Ford McMillen and Heather Roberson. As a companion volume to their earlier book, *Called to Courage: Four Women in Missouri History*, Margot Ford McMillen and Heather Roberson's *Into the Spotlight* provides the biographies of four more remarkable Missouri women. Although these women came from

radically different circumstances, they all shared a common sense of purpose, determination, and courage, and each used her own unique position to empower herself and others. Women featured include: Sacred Sun, a Native American of the Osage tribe; Emily Newell Blair, a worker for women's voting rights; Josephine Baker, a star of song and stage and a fervent civil rights activist; and Elizabeth Virginia Wallace, who married President Harry Truman.

Jane Froman: Missouri's First Lady of Song, by Ilene Stone. Once asked to name the ten best female singers, the renowned musical producer Billy Rose replied, "There is Jane Froman and nine others." A legend in her time, Jane Froman (1907-1980) was one of Missouri's greatest success stories. Her singing career, which spanned over three decades, included radio and television, recordings, nightclub performances, Broadway shows, and Hollywood movies.

Jesse James and the Civil War in Missouri, by Robert L. Dyer. *Jesse James and the Civil War in Missouri* discusses the underlying causes of the Civil War as they relate to Missouri and reveals how the war helped create both the legend and the reality of Jesse James and his gang. Written in an accessible style, this valuable book will be welcomed by anyone with an interest in the Civil War, the legend of Jesse James, or Missouri history.

Missouri at Sea: Warships with Show-Me State Names, by Richard E. Schroeder. Although the state of Missouri is located hundreds of miles from the nearest ocean, ships with Missouri names and connections have served the United States for decades. In *Missouri at Sea*, Richard Schroeder tells about the ships that were named after the state, its cities, and its favorite sons and explores the important role that each has played in American history.

On Shaky Ground: The New Madrid Earthquakes of 1811-1812, by Norma Hayes Bagnall. Although most Americans associate earthquakes with California, the tremors that shook the Mississippi valley in southeast Missouri from December 16, 1811, through February 7, 1812, are among the most violent quakes ever to hit the North American continent in recorded history. Collectively known as the New Madrid earthquakes, these quakes affected more than 1 million square miles. By comparison, the 1906 San Francisco earthquake affected only 60,000 square miles, less than one-sixteenth the area of the New Madrid earthquakes. Informative, clearly written, and well illustrated, *On Shaky Ground* will be of interest to all general readers, especially those interested in earthquakes or Missouri history.

Orphan Trains to Missouri, by Michael D. Patrick and Evelyn Goodrich Trickle. Cheap fares, the central location of the state, and numerous small farming towns along the railroad tracks made Missouri the perfect hub for orphan trains, even though many areas of the state were still largely unsettled. Researchers have estimated that from 150,000 to 400,000 children were sent out on orphan trains, with perhaps as many as 100,000 being placed in Missouri. *Orphan Trains to Missouri* documents the history of the children on those Orphan Trains – their struggles, their successes, and their failures. Touching stories of volunteers who oversaw the placement of the orphans as well as stories of the orphans themselves make this a rich record of American and midwestern history.

The Osage in Missouri, by Kristie C. Wolferman. In this well-written and very readable work, Kristie C. Wolferman traces the history of the Osage Nation from its origins to its forced departure from Missouri. She demonstrates the ways in which the Osage culture changed with

each new encounter of the Osage with Europeans. *The Osage in Missouri* suggests that the white men could never understand the Osage way of life, nor the Osage the white men's way. But Osage culture, greatly altered by Europeans and Americans, would never be the same again. The Osage would be forced to sacrifice most of their traditions and beliefs, as well as their homeland, on the way to becoming "civilized."

Paris, Tightwad, and Peculiar: Missouri Place Names, by Margot Ford McMillen. Paris, Tightwad, Peculiar, Neosho, Gasconade, Hannibal, Diamond, Quarantine, Zif, and Zig. These are just a few of the names Margot Ford McMillen covers in her lively new book on the history of place names in Missouri. The origins behind the names range from humorous to descriptive: Anyone interested in Missouri's history and folklore will be fascinated by this well-researched book. Readers interested in collecting and documenting Missouri place names will appreciate McMillen's tips and information.

Quinine and Quarantine: Missouri Medicine through the Years, by Loren Humphrey. Presenting a fascinating overview of medicine in Missouri from the early days of epidemics to present-day technological advances, *Quinine and Quarantine* approaches the history of medicine as an integral part of the state's development. Organized chronologically in fifty-year segments and written in language free of jargon, *Quinine and Quarantine* offers readers a broad historical view of the medical problems and solutions faced by the people of Missouri, preparing them to cope with medical issues of the new millennium.

The Trail of Tears across Missouri, by Joan Gilbert. As settlers moved beyond the eastern seaboard during the early nineteenth century, the government forced thousands of American Indians from their ancestral lands. The Cherokees, the largest and most important tribe in the Southeast, fought exile with a combination of passive resistance and national publicity for their plight. Because they had successfully resisted the government's efforts to move them from their homeland, their removal was particularly brutal when it finally came. *The Trail of Tears across Missouri* is a moving account of the 1837-1838 removal of the Cherokees from the southeastern United States to Indian Territory (now Oklahoma).

Literacy-Ready @ Your Library

ALA's Office of Outreach and Literacy services (OLOS) has done some inquiry and study with adult learners about adult literacy efforts at libraries. They have developed the following list of elements that might make a library "literacy-ready" for adult students; that is, these are elements of a library that successfully develop literacy in its patrons. These are characteristics of a library that make it friendly for adult learners. Libraries can use items from this list to measure how friendly the local library is for adult learners. The list may also be used for ideas about increasing the "literacy readiness" of the library. OLOS suggests libraries go beyond library staff to evaluate the literacy readiness of the library; the perspectives of adult literacy professionals, volunteer tutors, and adult learners will be valuable.

This list was developed in a state where direct instruction for adult education is done directly from libraries, but many of the ideas are also helpful for the literacy support role more often taken by Missouri libraries. It should not be interpreted as a list of demands, but a list of ideas. Some of these elements can help a library be well-prepared to add direct literacy activities to its other offerings. If a library houses a literacy program or does consider direct instruction, the list will help librarians envision how a full literacy instruction program at the library might look.

Making Your Library Literacy-Ready: WHAT DOES LITERACY-READY LOOK LIKE @ YOUR LIBRARY?

- ❑ Library staff receives training about adult literacy, adult learners, and library literacy.
- ❑ The library has a book collection for adult learners, tutors, and teachers.
- ❑ The library also has a collection of video and audio instructional and educational materials.
- ❑ The library has resources and educational materials in native languages to support reading and literacy development of ESOL adults and their children.
- ❑ The library is "user-friendly." The library staff is cordial, willing to help, and takes the initiative to provide help and support.
- ❑ The library director supports the literacy program.
- ❑ The literacy program is integrated into the library.
- ❑ The library staff understands and is responsive to the "needs" of adult learners.
- ❑ The library has signage appropriate for adult learners and others.
- ❑ Literacy students interact regularly with library staff and patrons.

- ❑ The library has greeters at the door.
- ❑ The library finds an alternative to the word “literacy” when labeling its collections and programs.
- ❑ The library collaborates and networks with other literacy providers and social service agencies in the community.
- ❑ The library has the resources and technology to meet the needs of adult learners.
- ❑ The library has a literacy program with dedicated staff.
- ❑ The library has facilities to meet the needs of a literacy program.
- ❑ The library has a literacy department.
- ❑ The library has an outreach program that informs adult non and new readers (and other underserved populations) about the range of library services available at the main and branch libraries.
- ❑ The literacy program has visibility in the community.
- ❑ The library supports the literacy program with funding and fundraising activities.
- ❑ The library has a bookmobile to reach adult learners in rural and remote areas.
- ❑ The library literacy program offers direct small group instruction for adult learners.
- ❑ The literacy program staff is qualified and consistent.
- ❑ The library offers a mentorship program for adult learners.
- ❑ The library receives media support showcasing their literacy services and programs.
- ❑ The library has developed multiple ways for adult learners to locate the literacy program.
- ❑ The literacy program has an assessment plan measuring learner progress and library usage.
- ❑ The library has adult learners as spokespeople, mentors, tutors, and staff.

More information about this ALA dialog with adult learners and librarians is located at <http://www.ala.org/ala/olos/outreachresource/makingyourlibrary.htm>.

Web Sites Related To Adult Literacy Learning

<http://www.litwomen.org/welearn.html>

WE LEARN (Women Expanding / Literacy Education Action Resource Network) promotes women's literacy as a tool for education and transformation. Contains resources, bibliographies, and ideas about working with low-literate women.

<http://www.ala.org/ala/olos/olosliteracy/adultliteracy.htm>

The American Library Association's adult literacy Web page.

<http://www.nifl.gov/>

The National Institute for Literacy, which contains a wealth of information and links about literacy in the United States and also is home to the "Equipped for the Future" adult education initiative and involved with some ongoing research into the literacy acquisition process in adults.

<http://www.dclibrary.org/dclearns/learner/help.html>

Literacy help from the Washington, D.C. Public Library.

<http://www.worlded.org/us/health/docs/comp/>

Offers an annotated bibliography of print and Web-based health materials for use with limited-literacy adults.

<http://www.iiri.org/citizenship/>

Contains notes at an easy reading level for citizenship questions and civics, and a PowerPoint presentation at a low literacy level on the history of the United States.

<http://www.alri.org/>

The Adult Education Teacher's Annotated Webliography, with notes about dozens of adult literacy sites for both adults and children and links to research.

<http://ncsall.gse.harvard.edu/fob/index.htm>

Focus on Basics is a journal for adult educators. Issues are arranged around a theme, and a good resource for those who are interested in Adult Literacy as a field.

<http://www.proliteracy.org/about/index.asp>

Proliteracy Worldwide is the largest organization for volunteer-staffed adult literacy programs. Contains links to articles and a publishing house with potential material for adult new learners and/or an adult new readers' collection.

<http://www.literacynet.org/value/>

VALUE (Voice for Adult Literacy United for Education) is a national organization of adult learners in the United States. The Web site contains some links and material to support learners and develop pride in the courage it takes to be an adult learner.

<http://www.ncrtec.org/pd/cw/adultlit.htm>

Captured Wisdom™ on Adult Literacy is a collection of resources and projects for adult learners; some might be models for short-term adult literacy projects out of the library, others may interest adult education partners who would find library resources helpful in implementing them.

Links to Adult Literacy and Education Resources

List provided by ProLiteracy Worldwide

Adult Literacy & Technology Network: www.altn.org

American Association for Adult and Continuing Education: www.aaace.org

American Council on Education & GED Testing Service: <http://www.acenet.edu/>

American Library Association: www.ala.org/

Center for Applied Linguistics: www.cal.org

Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee: <http://cls.coe.utk.edu>

Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication: <http://reading.indiana.edu/>

Commission on Adult Basic Education, Inc. (COABE): www.coabe.org/

Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy: www.caalusa.org

Educator's Reference Desk: www.eduref.org/

Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy & Goodling Institute: www.ed.psu.edu/isal

International Reading Association: www.reading.org

Learning Disabilities of America, Inc.: www.ldanatl.org/

NALS Synthetic Estimates of Adult Literacy: www.casas.org/lit/litcode/

National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center: <http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu/>

National Alliance of Literacy Coalitions: <http://www.naulc.org/>

National Center for Family Literacy: <http://famlit.org/>

National Center for Nonprofit Boards: <http://www.boardsource.org/>

National Center for the Study of Adult Learning & Literacy: <http://gseweb.harvard.edu/~ncsall/>

National Center on Adult Literacy: <http://ncal.literacy.upenn.edu/> or <http://www.literacy.org/>

National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium: <http://www.naepdc.org/>

National Institute for Literacy: <http://novel.nifl.gov/>

National Institute for Literacy's LINC'S: www.nifl.gov/lincs/search/search.html

Pfizer's Partnership for Clear Health Communication: www.askme3.org/

SCALE Student Coalition for Action in Literacy Education: www.readwriteact.org

TESOL Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages: www.tesol.org

United Way of America: <http://national.unitedway.org/>

U.S. Department of Education: www.ed.gov/

U.S. Office of Vocational & Adult Education: www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/index.html

Verizon Literacy Campus: <http://www.vluonline.org/>

Voice for Adult Literacy United for Education (VALUE): <http://literacynet.org/value/>

World Education: www.worlded.org

A Conversation about Stopping Illiteracy at the Source

Questions and answers from Tom Sticht, International Consultant, Adult Education

Q: Why do we have all these adults who are practically illiterate? Why can't they read?

A: Because the high schools are graduating functional illiterates, and we need to fix the high schools so they stop sending functional illiterates out into the world.

Q: Why don't the high schools teach students to read before they graduate them?

A: It's too late. The middle schools keep sending the high schools students who can't read, and the high schools can't teach the academic subjects and teach students to read at the same time. We need to have the middle schools stop sending students to high school who can't read.

Q: Why don't middle schools teach students to read before they send them to high school?

A: It's too late. The primary grades keep sending on the middle schools students who can't read, so the middle schools can't teach the subjects to prepare the students for high school and also teach the kids to read. We need to have the primary schools stop sending students who can't read to middle school.

Q: Why don't the primary schools teach students to read before they send them on to middle school?

A: It's too late. Parents keep sending children to primary school who have not been prepared to learn to read at home. We need a preschool like Head Start to prepare children to learn to read, so parents can stop sending children to primary school who aren't ready to learn to read.

Q: Why do so many children have to go to Head Start to get prepared to learn to read? Why don't parents prepare them at home?

A: It's too late by age three or four. That's why we need Early Head Start, so children can be prepared starting at birth to go to Head Start, so they can learn to read in primary school, so they can learn pre-high school subjects in middle school, so they can learn high school subjects and graduate from high school, literate and contributing to society.

Q: Why are so many children born unprepared to be prepared to learn to read?

A: It's too late by birth. Too many young adults are functionally illiterate and unable to take care of themselves. Often they get involved with drugs or other activities that destroy their bodies and harm their minds. They often have many out of wedlock births, they are frequently unable to make informed choices about good prenatal and postnatal care, and they are unable to afford it because they can't qualify for well paying jobs.

What we need is a high quality, well-funded adult education and literacy system in the United States that will prepare adults for parenting and profitable work which will permit them to provide for their own and their children's health, and send their children to school prepared to learn to read, support them through primary, middle and high schools, and graduate them with the literacy skills they need to participate fully in society.

It is not too late. Adult literacy education contributes to the solution of both present and future problems of adult literacy.

Activity Notes

What libraries do for adult literacy in Missouri

A list of library literacy efforts, ideas, activities, and collaborations

Literacy efforts in Missouri's libraries are diverse, and they represent many kinds of service and literacy support. The ideas collected below come from libraries actively supporting adult literacy, even though they don't actually run teaching programs. The ideas collected below come from libraries in Missouri, some previously done; others are in process, and still others ideas being developed. They are collected here as a catalogue of ideas that any other library in Missouri might borrow to increase library literacy efforts. The best ideas often come from the trenches!

- Put a deposit collection or rotating collection of new reader materials in an AEL (Adult Education and Literacy) center or in the classroom used by a local literacy council.
- Libraries provide space for local literacy council students and tutors to meet.
- Libraries provide classroom space for literacy classes or ESOL classes.
- Adults from literacy classes, GED classes, a family literacy center, or a teen parent group visit the library on a regular basis. The schedule allows the library to plan for them, reserve computers, issue library cards, offer short courses or help sessions with topics such as getting tax forms off the Internet, walk participants through a pre-selected parenting Web site, etc.
- Libraries host or arrange programs in the community or in the library for both literacy groups and other community or civic groups; this not only educates but removes the distinction between literate and low-literate patrons.
- Some libraries make GED books available in spite of problems, at least on a reference shelf. Several places have persuaded a local business to provide these, since the rate of non-return is high.
- Libraries post flyers advertising GED classes in the video section or in other sections of the stacks that attract either people who may need classes or people who have connections with people who need literacy help.
- Some libraries put together special collections, such as a parenting collection or job seeker resources that unobtrusively include books at low reading levels.
- Consider selected juvenile works as alternatives for adult new or struggling readers.
- An idea for getting low-literacy patrons into a library is to let a literacy program or a social services agency issue a referral card or coupon to be presented at the library for a library card application and maybe a free book. The referral form or card could already have on it the information needed to fill out the application, and it will alert the desk staff to be helpful. It doesn't need to look like an educational referral, more like a coupon.

Adding the incentive of a free child's book, a free issue of a general-interest magazine, or other "freebie" helps a lot.

- Libraries find ways besides having uneasy staff members get library card applications from adults who may have trouble filling out forms. For example, parent educators have everyone fill out a library card application at a meeting, and follow up with a meeting in the library that includes a tour.
- At least one Missouri library uses appropriate "weeds" from the collection to put an offsite collection at a nursing home. The same concept would work at an adult education center, a shelter, or a waiting room. Since the books and magazines are "weeds," loss won't matter. Since the library checks on it and adds new materials once in a while the small collection won't become outdated, too shabby, or retain useless materials.
- Shelve a copy of a book that has been filmed beside the video or DVD of that film.
- Some libraries offer workshops for parents, such as "how to help with homework" or "how to survive your kid's science project." These have the secondary literacy agenda of getting literacy information to parents.
- Some programs supporting children's academic achievement include parent participation. One library partners with a local adult education center to offer short courses such as *Helping Your Kids with Division*, addressing skills parents also need but may not want to admit they need. At least one library periodically hosts a series of *Phonics for Parents* presentations.
- Programs for seniors may include computer literacy, large print books, taped books to nursing homes, and referrals to Wolfner Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.
- Parent educators can use a library for meetings, help families get cards, and learn to use the library in the process. One meeting might be a sample story hour that encourages parents to bring children back for the regular story hour.
- One Missouri library reports a partnership with Head Start that brings in 10 families (chosen by Head Start) for a one-evening program on reading with kids. Held once a year, the program also gives away free books and has been very successful.
- Some Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) classes visit the local library on a regular basis. This gets the students there and also gives the library a chance to prepare, reserve computers, etc.
- Children's librarians can come to parent education sessions or participate on planning teams as a resource person in family literacy or parent education programs. In some communities the children's librarian may be one of the most knowledgeable people available on the subject of children and reading.

Literacy services for adults who are also parents

Librarians have long known that serving children means serving their families. Often children are the reason adults seek literacy help and improvement. Although we don't refer to children as low-literate, they too are beginning the literacy process. Children are a reason to introduce parents to both reading support services and easy-reading books. Parenthood dignifies adults reading children's books at low reading levels.

These ideas for reaching low-literate parents by serving families have come from libraries, many of them from libraries in Missouri. Parent programs are generally done in partnership with some other effort or organization. In some communities the children's librarian is a primary resource person on books and children so becomes an important parent resource person.

Family Nights at the Library and other family programs invite families to the library at a certain time. One format starts the evening with a brief joint book reading, which builds enthusiasm for reading and demonstrates how to read to children. Then children and parents split up, and the parents listen to a speaker while the children have an activity related to the book. When possible every family goes home with a children's book.

Another frequent format for family nights is where the library or a partner agency plans an activity where children and parents participate together. Parents As Teachers (PAT), Practical Parenting Partnership (PPP), and community agencies are often looking for ideas and collaborations with other local entities.

Some libraries provide free help-your-child-read packets for parents, with suggestions for games and word lists; the material in these kits is at a low adult reading level.

One public library added book carts of material for adults to a school library, and the school libraries stayed open on certain evenings as a substitute for or adjunct to a branch public library. This expanded literacy support in the communities.

One library has book exchange racks in a local coffee shop and Laundromat. It includes children's books as well as adult titles.

A few libraries have done the "Read from the Start" program with the Missouri Humanities Council, or other national grant programs such as Prime Time or PBS Between the Lions; some have also adapted ALA's Born to Read or Dolly Parton's Imagination Library for their localities.

Some libraries participate in a project to give new parents a bag of infants' books and parenting materials; frequent partners are community betterment agencies, social services, or a hospital birthing center. A few libraries do it directly or help with the fundraiser for such a program. In addition, some libraries give new siblings children's books (they include one about having a new baby in the house), tote bags, and a few other goodies.

Placing short books at all reading levels in places where people have to wait – doctor's offices, social services offices, clinics, etc. – is a literacy effort.

Public libraries can have reading events for families or a group of siblings instead of individual children. (This is great for home schoolers!)

Libraries find many events where book give-aways or book prizes are appropriate: trick or treat at the library, community festivals, books in food-pantry Christmas boxes etc.

Books can be included in holiday food baskets given to families by another organization.

Traditional story times, lap-sits, and toddler times can be thought of as “how to do it” sessions for parents. Taking such programs to parents that don’t usually come to a library is a literacy outreach that may help children do well in school. Head Start, day care centers, teen mom programs, and social services offices may serve as possible sites.

One library is exploring having a scheduled story time for children in the WIC office during a time when parents must be there meeting with social workers. Some pediatrician’s offices are also choosing to support literacy and might be open to a literacy activity during a well baby clinic.

Ways a Library can Serve New Readers

1. Provide meeting space for tutoring, training, or other general literacy activities.
2. Give employees an orientation to sensitize them to the needs of non-readers; inform staff about literacy council activities.
3. Encourage employee involvement with a local literacy council.
4. Display flyers and posters and other publicity for local literacy activities.
5. Provide office space for literacy council.
6. Library cooperatives can provide delivery service to distribute literacy materials to libraries in the area, encouraging full use of these specialized materials.
7. Promote literacy activities to the Friends of the Library, if you have such a group.
8. Provide literacy collections for use by students, tutors, and agencies.
9. Keep catalogs from literacy publishers for reference.
10. Subscribe to *News for You*, a newspaper published for low-level readers by New Readers Press.
11. Invite all literacy tutors in the area to a coffee/discussion meeting with the library staff; suggest that all pupils be brought to the library for orientation and that tutors show their students how to phone the library for information.
12. Visit adult education and remedial reading classes on a regular basis to promote library materials and services.
13. Offer workshops on how to use the library for staff and students in adult basic education programs.
14. Place deposit collection in education centers and welfare and unemployment offices.
15. Order multiple copies of low-level materials so pupils and teachers can have copies.
16. Train staff to use a readability formula such as the Fry Readability Formula.
17. Take the director of your local literacy program to lunch and build a good working relationship.
18. Have names and addresses of local literacy organizations and individual tutors easily accessible for referrals by library staff.
19. Prepare a presentation for your library board to show the need to support local training efforts through literacy collections and other programs.
20. Write radio public service announcements about the availability of low level reading materials in the library; send them to radio stations, especially country, popular, religious, and minority stations in your area.
21. Sponsor or co-sponsor information sessions on life-coping skills such as filling out a job application.
22. Provide a deposit collection for your local prison or juvenile detention center.
23. Ask local clubs, church groups, organizations, and individuals to help support literacy efforts, financially if necessary.
24. Give story-telling workshops for personnel in Head Start and other pre-school programs.

From *Libraries and Literacy: A Literacy Handbook*, Library of Michigan. 4/87.



Thoughts from a library literacy program in Illinois

Walking with adult learners

Research is showing that literacy projects need to provide multi-sensory, sequential, structured programs that serve native-born adult new readers. These individuals may not read and write well, often because they were not taught in a way that made sense to them.

The literacy program at Waukegan Public Library operates as a team, capitalizing on each person's strengths. One staff member is a writer, one is a speaker and one is an adult new reader who "walks" with the students. It takes all three to run an effective program.

About three years ago, a committee of adult literacy educators studied the topic of assessment. The committee invited the literacy program staff at the library to shift the paradigm of assessment to that of being "co-assessors" with the adult learners. When the staff shifted to the position of "co-assessor," they realized how much they needed to listen to the students. And listening over the years has brought the program to new places.

Adult learners are capable, responsible people. The processing of print often is their only limitation. Their ability to think, organize and lead often are well developed. What we need to do as volunteers and educators is support the students and walk with them, but as co-assessors we must not put ourselves into a position of power over them.

In order to better understand their needs and learn from their experiences, we must involve them in our practices — hire and train them as staff and take them to conferences.

Successful leadership in adult literacy is contingent on teams that include both adult learners and educators — teams that realize there is much to be learned from one another. The best practices will only develop when this is achieved. Learn more about the needs of adult learners at:

www.nifl.gov

The Equipped for the Future study, National Institute for Literacy, lists the core things that adult learners want, including a "voice" and "access."

www.literacynet.org/value

Voice of Adult Literacy United for Education is a national organization run by and for adult learners.

literacy.kent.edu/illinois/illearners.htm

"A Different Kind of Smart" is a video of an improvisational theater production that offers a glimpse of what it is like to be a new reader in a literate society.

(Carol Morris, literacy program, Waukegan Public Library, contributor)



More than 1,000 students and literacy program staff attended Legislative Awareness Day in Springfield in April, organized by the Illinois Adult and Continuing Educators Association. At the Secretary of State Literacy Office participants got to choose a book or magazine to take home, donated by the Literacy Office staff.

This is a sample of a library handbook at a low reading level produced by the Washington D.C. library. The original can be found at:

<http://www.dclibrary.org/dclearn/learner/help/mlk.html>

The MLK LIBRARY HANDBOOK

Why This Handbook?

This Handbook tells you about the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library. It tells about the books in each room of the library. It tells how to find information. It has a list of the addresses and phone numbers of the other libraries in D.C. It tells about interesting library programs.

If you have any questions about this Handbook or about the library, please call 202/727-1616 or come to Room 300 of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library.

How to Get to the Library

The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library is at the corner of 9th and G Streets NW. It is just one block from bus and Metro stops.

BY BUS

The “S” bus stops at 11th and G Streets. The “G6” bus stops at 9th and G Streets. The “42” bus stops at 9th and G Streets.

BY METRO

Take the Red or Yellow/Green Line Metro to the Gallery Place stop.

Use the 9th and G Streets exit.

Or take the Orange/Blue Line Metro to the Metro Center stop. Use the 11th and G Streets exit.

BY CAR

The library has an underground parking lot. It is free to park there. You must get on 10th Street. Then turn left on G Place to get to the garage.

Getting Your Library Card

You can get a free D.C. Public Library card if you live in:

D.C.

Montgomery or Prince George's County, Maryland

Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, or Prince William County, Virginia

Falls Church or Alexandria, Virginia

You must come to the library yourself to get the card, and you must bring something with you that has your name and address printed on it, such as:

a driver's license or other I.D.

a bill or letter mailed to you within the past two weeks

(If you are living in a shelter for the homeless, you must bring a letter from the shelter. Let the shelter know that the letter must be on what is called "letterhead stationery.")

And don't forget! Your children can also get library cards. But they must be able to print their name in order to get a card.

Layout: The First Floor

There are many rooms in the library. Each room has different kinds of books in it. Each room has a name that tells you what kinds of books you will find there.

Ask at the Book Information Service Desk where to find the books and materials you want. Here you can also find out about special displays, programs and meetings held on the "A" level of the Library.

Behind the Information Desk is a set of card files called the card catalog. The card catalog will soon be gone. There are now computers here that tell you what books are in the library. Ask for help in using the computers at the Information Desk.

At each side of the front door are two more desks. One is for checking out your books, and the other is for returning your books and getting a library card.

On one side of the 1st floor you will find the Popular Library, Young Adult Services, and the College Information Center. The Popular Library has stories, mysteries, romances and paperback books. Young Adult Services has books for young adults and computers they can use. The College Information Center has print and computerized information for anyone who needs to find out more about college education.

On the other side of the 1st floor is the Business and Technology room. Here is where you can find books on jobs and resumes and telephone books from other cities and states.

In front of Business and Technology is "Books Plus." In this store you can buy a sample GED Practice Test for \$8.00. The store also has books, cards, jewelry, and gifts for sale.

Layout: The Second Floor

Room 220 is for Sociology, Education and Philosophy.

Across the hall in Room 222 is the Adult Learning Center. Adult learners and tutors can meet here to study reading, writing, and math. Tutors should call the Literacy Resources Division to reserve space (202-727-1616).

Room 200 is the Children's Room, with books, records, and games. On the walls are pictures that children have drawn. If your children are at home and want to hear a story, they can call Dial-A-Story, 202-638-5717. They will hear a different story each week. This is a free call!

Across the hall from the Children's Room is the Audiovisual Room.

You can check out entertainment videos at the Library for \$2.00 a day or \$2.00 for the weekend. Educational videos and Books-On-Tape are free. You need your library card and I.D. to check out videos.

Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

Room 215 is the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. This room has books and tapes for people who are blind or need large print books. The Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped also sends out books to people who cannot get to the library. Also in Room 215 is the Coordinator of the Literacy for the Deaf Project. If you know a deaf or hard-of-hearing person who wants to study reading and writing with a tutor, visit Room 215 or call 202-727-2145.

Also in this room is the Lifelong Learning Center. This center has services for older adults.

In Rooms 207 and 209 are History and Biography (books about peoples' lives).

Layout: The Third Floor

Literacy Resources Division

On the 3rd floor in Room 300 is the Literacy Resources Division.

The Adult Basic Education Collection is in this room. You can find easy-to-read stories and books to help you learn reading, writing, and math, and study for the GED. There are also books to help speakers of other languages (ESL students) learn English.

In Room 300 you can also find out about many reading and writing schools and GED programs in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. You can also call (202) 727-2431 to find out about reading, writing, math and English as a Second Language classes.

CALICO-DC

CALICO-DC (Computer Assisted Literacy Center of DC) is also in Room 300. Adult learners and their teachers can use the computer software programs. There are reading, writing, spelling,

math, pre-GED and GED programs on the computers. Call 727-1616 to make an appointment to use the lab.

Periodical Room

Room 311 is the Periodical Room. This is where you find old issues of magazines.

Washingtoniana

Room 307 is Washingtoniana and the Washington Star Collection. You can look up things in old newspapers and learn about D.C. No materials can be checked out of Washingtoniana.

Black Studies Division

Room 316 is the Black Studies Division. Here you can learn about Black History in America and all over the world. No materials can be checked out of Black Studies.

There are rest rooms on this floor.

Layout: The Fourth Floor

On the 4th floor are the offices of the director and her staff, as well as work areas for the people who help keep the Library running.

Thanks!

These teachers and adult learners from Washington, D.C. worked hard to put this Handbook together:

Catherine Baker
Janet Brown
Marcia Harrington
John Johnson

Martha Lloyd
Sharon Morgenthaller
Monica O'Connell
Elaine Randall

Lottie Stevens
Hilda Warner
Paula Johnson Williams
Dorothy Williamson

An Alternate Idea For Serving Low-Literate Adults

The Free Library of Philadelphia gives adult new reader books to students in adult literacy programs who get a library card. Just as being surrounded by books helps children become literate, having books in the environment helps adults become literate. The plan of giving books to adult students has several library advantages. Loss, damage, and lack of circulation of these materials are not the library's problem. The strategy gets these unlikely patrons to come into the library and get library cards. It builds good feelings about the library and builds bridges for working with adult literacy instructors.

Once the library is a familiar and friendly, adult students may return to use the library in a more conventional fashion. Fortunately, most adult new reader materials are not expensive. It might be possible to persuade a business, foundation, or philanthropic individual to contribute funds for such a project.

Reproducible Information

GED Information on the Web

The official GED information page for the United States:

<http://www.acenet.edu/clll/ged/index.cfm>.

The GED page for Missouri residents who want to earn a GED:

http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/ged_index.htm.

Applications to take the GED test may be printed from:

http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/ged_application.htm.

The test cannot be taken online or at will. Applicants must go to an official testing center for a scheduled test session. They must apply and be approved in advance for the specific testing date and place. Instructions for students ready to take the test are at: http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/ged_take_the_test.htm.

In Missouri, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education offers an online tutorial for the GED that is free to any Missouri resident. At this writing the prospective student must go to an AEL class to take a placement test, register, and get a password, but after that the tutorial is free and may be accessed any time from any internet connected computer. Information is available at:

<http://www.gedonlineclass.com/>.

There is a list of Adult Education class sites offering free traditional classes to help students get a GED at: http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/ael_mo_program.htm.

Sample GED test questions can be found at

<http://www.acenet.edu/clll/ged/samples/index.cfm>. Sample GED materials are available at numerous commercial sites that sell GED preparation materials. Using “GED test” as a search term in a search engine will give you access to most of them.

Commercial self-study GED courses are available at bookstores and on the Web; the cost for these courses varies.



The Picture From The Numbers in 2004 Adult Low Literacy in Missouri

- ✓ The 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) reported that 17% of Missourians were at the lowest level of literacy. This 17% included non-native speakers of English.
- ✓ Census 2000 reported that 18.7% of adults over age 25 in Missouri lack a high school diploma or GED. The non-graduation rate in Missouri's public schools was 16%-19% in last five years, 16.1% in 2002.
- ✓ In 2003 MAP scores place 26.4% of our public school 11th graders below grade level ("step 1" or "progressing"), which suggests they are low-literate.

It is reasonable to say that 16%-19% of adult Missourians have literacy issues.

For the record:

- In FY-01, 49% of Missourians receiving public assistance lacked a high school diploma or GED. In 2002, 54% of incarcerated offenders in Missouri lacked a high school diploma or its equivalent. 2.7% of Missouri's population in 2000 was foreign born (an 80.8% increase over 1990), and about half of them reported speaking English less than well. Immigration of non-English speakers continues. It is not clear from numbers how many low-literate adult Missourians are non-native speakers of English and how many of them were born in the USA.
- The National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) 2003 is in process; Missouri is in the sample.

Immigration: a numerical glimpse of Missouri

- ✓ In the 2000 census, foreign-born individuals represented 2.7% of Missouri's population. (This may be an undercount.)
- ✓ Half of them entered the United States since 1990, so about 1.5% of Missourians are fairly recent immigrants.
- ✓ 77% of foreign-born families speak a language other than English at home. At least a fourth of those report speaking English less than well.
- ✓ At least 2% of Missouri's total population call themselves Hispanic, whether native born or foreign born.
- ✓ Averages may not represent a given community.

Appendix:

More Resources & General Handouts

Finding your school district's scores for the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP)

MAP test scores and other data for individual school districts are found at <http://dese.mo.gov/schooldata/>.

Scroll down to and highlight the name of the district from the box “Alphabetical List of School Districts.”

Click the “load profile” gray box.

Each district page will be divided into categories for information. MAP scores are in the Educational Performance Data. You may have to scroll down to reach that section. Click on the name of the MAP section you want to view. Reading is part of Communication Arts. Other statistics for that school district (graduation rates, annual dropout rates, accreditation, etc.) are on that page also.

Libraries support reading achievement

While debate about methods of teaching reading continues, almost every school of thought now agrees:

- Early access to many kinds of books builds the base for literacy.
- Reading to children and discussing what was read is the single most important thing parents and caregivers can do to help children read and succeed in school.
- Once children learn the basics, they need a lot of easy books to practice reading. The more they read the better they read.
- Recreational reading builds literacy skill and intellectual development.

Library collections and programming make a literacy difference!

LIFT-Missouri

Missouri's Literacy Resource Center

Literacy Investment for Tomorrow, usually called LIFT-Missouri, is the State Literacy Resource Center. It is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation funded through a variety of state and federal grants, private foundations, and individual contributions. Its major focus is support, training, and resources for literacy providers statewide. LIFT-Missouri has offices in St. Louis, Kansas City, and Jefferson City, and the St. Louis office serves as its headquarters.

As the state literacy resource center, LIFT's mission is to develop and promote resources to increase the literacy skills of Missourians so all individuals can reach their personal and economic potential. LIFT maintains an 800 number (800-729-4443) and serves as a referral to literacy and GED programs statewide. Their Web page, <http://www.lift-missouri.org/>, also offers a directory of programs.

Working with the support of the Missouri State Library, LIFT has served as a state clearinghouse for inquiries about adult and early childhood literacy programs, materials, and professional development and training opportunities. LIFT also provides professional development opportunities in basic and advanced family literacy, using computer technology to access literacy resource, and working with low literate adults with learning disabilities.

LIFT Projects

Innovative: *LIFT's expertise centers on applying creative approaches to literacy-related issues.*

- **Family Literacy**
Since the early 1990s, LIFT has pioneered efforts to promote family literacy in Missouri. Family literacy programs bring together low-literate adults and their young children for a family-focused educational experience. Parents learn parenting, life, and work readiness skills while their children build a solid foundation for entering kindergarten ready to read.
- **Professional Development**
LIFT's professional development activities for literacy providers promote continuous improvement by crafting training sessions linked with ongoing technical assistance, in conjunction with continuous evaluation. LIFT identifies and fulfills training needs not otherwise provided in Missouri.
- **Web-Based Resources**
LIFT's Web site allows access to on-line literacy resources, a searchable directory of literacy programs and providers, on-line discussion groups, links to state and national literacy organizations, and *LIFT eNews*, a free electronic newsletter. LIFT also provides funding and support for an online newspaper with current stories, backed with easy-to-use lesson plans. It is an interactive tool that parents, tutors, and teachers can use to help students become better readers.
- **Early Literacy & Technology**
By utilizing online resources, LIFT helps teachers practice strategies to promote early literacy in parents and their young children. These resources include activities that address phonological awareness, the alphabetic principle, word recognition, listening, vocabulary,

and comprehension. Teachers learn to download lesson plans, experience interactive sites, and order free instructional resources.

Collaborative: *With a wide range of partner agencies, LIFT develops and directs multifaceted, literacy-related projects.*

- **National & State Organizations**

LIFT directs multiple statewide projects and meets stringent accountability measures from state and federal funding sources. Partner agencies include the National Center for Family Literacy, the National Institute for Literacy, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Missouri State Library, and the University of Missouri.

- **Parental Involvement**

The Missouri Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) (<http://www.missouri-pirc.org/>) serves parents, schools, and community organizations throughout the state by providing a wide range of information, training, technical assistance, and resources to help parents promote their children's achievement in school. A collaborative effort of LIFT, Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc., ParentLink, Practical Parenting Partnerships, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and others, the Missouri PIRC disseminates parent-related information to parents in all areas of the state. On another level, the Missouri PIRC partners provide intensive services targeted to parents in urban and rural communities in Missouri with children attending low-performing schools.

- **Missouri Family Literacy Initiative**

LIFT manages the Missouri Family Literacy Initiative (MOFLI), (<http://www.lift-missouri.org/projects/mofli.html>) composed of leaders from Missouri state agencies and organizations working together to strengthen and expand family literacy. MOFLI has produced family literacy publications, improved program accountability, and helped shape a new law making family literacy an integral part of education in Missouri.

- **Webster University**

LIFT enjoys a formal working relationship with Webster University through the university's School of Education. Together, Webster and LIFT apply research-based solutions to literacy issues and integrate literacy knowledge into academic environments.

Research-Based: *Current research on reading, family literacy, and other topics drives LIFT's efforts to improve the quality of literacy services in Missouri.*

- **Reading**

LIFT relies on scientific-based reading research to develop training programs for adult educators who work with low-literate adults, early childhood educators who work with preschool children, and volunteer reading tutors who work with all ages.

- **Family Literacy**

LIFT introduced family literacy in Missouri in 1991. According to research from the U.S. Department of Education, family literacy has a positive impact on parents and children. Parents become more self-sufficient, children enter school more ready to learn, and families change the intergenerational pattern of low literacy and poverty.

- **Training & Technical Assistance**

LIFT creates new, research-based professional development opportunities for early childhood and adult educators. LIFT staff regularly visit family literacy programs

throughout the state to provide individualized training for literacy providers to work with programs to improve quality and accountability.

- **Tutor Training**

LIFT provides unique tutor training, delivered through initial and ongoing sessions, including: reading level assessment, lesson plans, individual and small group literacy skill building, electronic journaling, and activities that create a literacy-rich environment.

LIFT Office Locations

LIFT St. Louis
11885 Lackland Rd, Ste 600
St. Louis, MO 63146
(314) 291-4443
(314) 291-7385 fax

LIFT Kansas City
C/o Webster University
1200 E. 104th Street
Kansas City, MO 64131
(816) 926-4278
(816) 444-1740 fax

LIFT Jefferson City
398 Dix Road, Suite 203
Jefferson City, MO 65109
(573) 636-0101
(573) 636-0103 fax

What makes a book easy to read at any reading level?

- ✓ Larger print - twelve point or larger.
- ✓ White space and good contrast between print and background.
- ✓ Ragged right margin (not justified at the left edge).
- ✓ Diagrams and pictures on the same page as the text that refers to them.
- ✓ Type styles that are regular and have “feet” or serifs.

(Like **this** or **this** but not **this** or **this**.)

- ✓ An author who does not assume the reader has background knowledge.
- ✓ Writing styles using simple or short sentences.
- ✓ Writing styles using straightforward connected narrative.
- ✓ Vocabulary simple enough that the reader does not meet too many unfamiliar words, but not so restricted that the story becomes stilted or incomprehensible.
- ✓ Predictability and pattern.
- ✓ Short chapters or sections.
- ✓ Modern language with standard spelling.

What makes a book hard to read at any reading level?

- ✓ Tiny print.
- ✓ Page after page of print without breaks.
- ✓ Bright background colors and poor contrast with the print.
- ✓ Jumbled appearance, extraneous graphics.
- ✓ Story interpolations or scrambled chronology.
- ✓ Difficult or highly varied vocabulary. (Although ironically, big words follow the rules of phonics more often than small common words do.)
- ✓ Figurative or foreign language.
- ✓ Long or complex sentences.
- ✓ Topics outside of the reader’s experience or familiarity.
- ✓ Old-fashioned language, attempts to spell out accents, or mispronunciations.

A General Note About Reading Levels

When we try to collect materials suitable for low-level readers, the literacy level of the materials is an issue in addition to the other criteria we use in collection development. Publishers use several ways of indicating what materials might be suitable for new readers, which is an artificial process used to indicate materials suitable for readers at different skill levels. Imperfect but sometimes useful, it does help us select materials that are easy to read for children and others who might be new or struggling readers.

Reading levels compare readers to each other, and are only somewhat standardized. An individual's ability to read a particular text depends on many factors, including background knowledge, interest, the quality and style of the writing, format, and graphics, and a measured reading level. It is seldom necessary to calculate a reading level for books, particularly children's titles, since many catalogues, lists of instructional materials, and lists of reading materials for the many curricula or publishing houses available on the Internet place reading levels of some kind on materials. The increased emphasis placed on testing and reading levels leads publishers to calculate reading levels for more and more materials.

The most common reading level marker is grade level; that is, text considered independent reading at each grade in school. There are several formulas for figuring grade levels, and different formulas sometimes yield different grade levels on the same passage. Different companies may figure grade level a little differently. Grade levels are probably the reading difficulty level most frequently used. Grade level is tied to the schooling of children but sometimes figured for adult or young adult materials.

Another reading level, Guided Reading (GR), measures the level at which a student can successfully read a text with some help from a teacher. Other frameworks call this point the instructional reading level. GR levels are usually tied to grade levels. Since libraries are providing leisure reading materials, the guided reading level is of less interest than the independent reading level.

Since grade levels are not particularly pertinent for adult students, in adult reading circles grade levels are sometimes replaced with the terms "beginning new reader," "intermediate new reader," and "advanced new reader." These terms are also realistically vague since reading level depends on some things that can't be measured ahead of time. Similarly, terms such as "emerging reader," "independent reader," "advanced reader," or "struggling reader" are descriptive, but only somewhat helpful in choosing books.

Another way of measuring and indicating the difficulty of a text is the lexile measurement. Lexiles measure the difficulty of text itself. Lower lexile levels are easier to read. For practical purposes, the lexile scale runs from a very simple 200, which would be a simple book like *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, to 1700, which would be an advanced textbook. Lexiles of 500-700 are probably an intermediate adult student or middle (third or fourth grade) elementary student reading level. Since lexiles deal with text itself instead of standards for instruction, they may be most useful for librarians.

Web Sites With Literacy Activities

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory: www.nwrel.org/learns/trainingopps/games/

Missouri Department of Conservation: www.conservation.state.mo.us/teacher/elementary/

PBS teacher resources: www.pbs.org/teachersource/

PBS Reading Between the Lions: <http://pbskids.org/lions/>

Summer Home Learning Recipes: www.ed.gov/pubs/Recipes/

Library of Congress Homepage for Kids & Families: www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi

Children's Literature Web Guide: www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/lists.html

The Saint Louis Art Museum's Resource Center (www.slam.org/) provides services and instructional materials such as slide kits, videos, audiocassettes, posters, and touchable-art kits. These materials are wonderful tools for educators, researchers, students, and parents. Loans of the materials are made to Museum members (sorry, metropolitan-area members only) and educators from Missouri, and Illinois educators who are members or with a rental fee; others may purchase the materials.

St. Louis Science Center: www.slsc.org/

Bill Nye the Science Guy (check out the "at home" demo section): www.billnye.com

The Kids on the Web: Fun Stuff I: www.zen.org/~brendan/kids-fun.html

Web sites for Kids

Dr. Seuss's Seussville: www.randomhouse.com/seussville/university/

Children's Television Workshop: www.ctw.org

Smithsonian Institution-National Zoo: www.si.edu/natzoo/

Teach-nology: http://teachers.teach-nology.com/web_tools/materials/bingo/

Crossword puzzle maker: www.puzzle-maker.com/CW/

NASA Kids Word Find builder:

<http://kids.msfc.nasa.gov/Teachers/WordFindBuilder/PuzzleBuilder.html>

NASA Educational Division: <http://kids.msfc.nasa.gov/Teachers/>

Dave's ESL Café: ESL lesson plans & Web sites: www.eslcafe.com/

Information, activities, and advice for Spanish-speaking parents (and tutors) about reading (in English and Spanish): www.colorincolorado.org/

No Flying, No Tights: A site reviewing graphic novels for teens: www.noflyingnotights.com/

Write Away! Graphic Novels and Comic Books – Information about using graphic novels and comic books to encourage new readers: <http://improbability.ultralab.net/writeaway/comics.htm>

American Library Association literacy section: www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=literacy

This 'how to' site that gives instructions for crafts and do it yourself projects for a variety of age groups and themes, includes section on using recycled and found supplies: www.make-stuff.com/.

Scripts and Tips for Reader's Theater: www.aaronshp.com/rt/

What Libraries Do For Literacy in Missouri

A compilation: ongoing library literacy efforts, ideas, activities, and collaborations for all age groups from public libraries in Missouri

Literacy efforts in Missouri's libraries are diverse, and they represent many kinds of service and literacy support. The ideas collected below come from libraries in Missouri, and some are programs previously done, others are efforts in process, and still others ideas that are being developed. They are collected here as a catalogue of ideas that any other library in Missouri might borrow to increase library literacy efforts. The best ideas often come from the trenches!

ADULTS/PARENTS

- * Put a deposit collection or rotating collection of new reader materials in an AEL center.
- * Provide space for local literacy council students and tutors to meet; in some cases provide classroom space for literacy classes or ESOL classes.
- * AEL, adults from a Family Literacy Center, or a teen parent group visit the library on a regular basis. Libraries can plan for them, reserve computers, issue library cards, offer short courses in things like getting tax forms off the Internet, walk them through a pre-selected parenting site, etc.
- * Host or arrange programs in the community or in the library for both literacy groups and other community or civic groups. It not only educates, but removes the distinction between literate and low-literate patrons.
- * Have GED books available in spite of problems (maybe at least on reference shelf). Several places have persuaded a local business to provide these since the rate of non-return is high.
- * Advertise for GED classes by posting a flyer in the sections of the stacks that interest people who may need them. Be sure to also consider flyers for those people who are involved with those needing literacy help.
- * Offer special collections, such as a parenting collection or a collection of job seekers resources, which unobtrusively include books at low reading levels.
- * Allow area literacy programs or a social services agency to issue referral cards or coupons, to be presented at the library for a library card application and maybe a free book. The referral form or card could already include the information needed to fill out the application, and will alert the desk staff to be helpful. It doesn't need to look like an educational referral, but more like a free coupon.
- * Figure out a way besides having uneasy staff members get library card applications to adults who aren't used to the library: For example, parent educators could have everyone fill out a

library card application at a meeting and follow up with a meeting at the library that includes a tour.

- * Use appropriate “weeds” from the collection to put an offsite collection at an adult education center, nursing home, shelter, or waiting room; since the books and magazines are “weeds,” loss won’t matter.
- * Shelf a copy of a book that has been filmed beside the video of that film.
- * Offer workshops for adults, such as “How to Help with Homework,” or “How to Survive and Help with a Science Project.”
- * Programs to support kids reading achievement, that include parent participation.
- * Partner with a local adult education center or parent group to offers short courses, such as “Helping Your Kids with Division,” that address skills that parents also need but may not want to admit they need.
- * At least one library periodically hosts “Phonics for Parents” presentations.
- * Programs for seniors including computer literacy, large print books and taped books to nursing homes, referrals to Wolfner Library for the Blind and Physically handicapped
- * Parent educators use the library for meetings, and help families get cards and learn to use the library.
- * Offer conversation practice groups or other ESOL efforts; some can be intergenerational.
- * A partnership with Head Start that once a year brings in ten families for an evening program on reading with kids plus free books.
- * Encourage ABE visits to the library on a regular basis. This gets those clients at the library, and gives the library a chance to prepare for their needs, reserve computers, etc.
- * Consider selected juvenile works as alternatives for adult new or struggling readers.
- * The librarian comes to parent education sessions as resource person in AEL or Family Literacy programs.

YOUNG CHILDREN/PRE-LITERACY ACTIVITIES

- * Rotate boxes or tubs of books to local public daycare centers. A program in one large city customizes tubs for the individual daycare centers and allows children to check out the books and even take them home, monitored by a teacher. They have the resources to forgive losses and overdue fines from the daycare centers.

- * Send a librarian to daycare centers on a monthly basis, offering story times and/or books to choose and keep at the center until the librarian comes back. Then “trade” for new books the next time the librarian visits, which introduces the concept of check out and return.
- * Offer story hours and other activities for specific groups, which takes services to them and acculturates them to library expectations.
- * Offer daytime programs for groups like Head Start.
- * One library has a designated story time for special needs children, in collaboration with a special needs center. The center’s aides are there to help with the children.
- * Offer story hour especially for daycare centers and preschools so teachers and aides are there to help with kids and follow-up.
- * Arrange preschool reading programs with volunteers to help read, and offer an activity calendar to take home.
- * Use the library facility for daycare licensing workshops, which brings in workers and makes them aware of the library.
- * Lend developmental toys and/or reading/spelling/math games.
- * Form local partnership with organizations like Success by Six or Caring Communities.

SCHOOL AGE KIDS AND TEENS

- * Tutor school kids, either by individual volunteers or through formal homework helpers programs. This is probably more common now than tutoring adults.
- * A state representative read for story time and brought donated Scholastic books with him.
- * Workshops like “Draw Your Own Comic Strip” and “Icky Science for Kids.”
- * A science project program has been popular where the science fair is important to the community.
- * Read Across America events, where younger kids enjoy the events and older kids help host or produce them.
- * Teen versions of ESOL conversation partners groups, if there is an immigrant population in your area.
- * Partner for reading efforts with local schools, both in programming and to have certain materials correlating with programs at the school.

- * Set aside activity time for a group foster home.
- * Offer public library presentations and book talks at schools.
- * Purchase a book in honor of each kindergarten graduate with a special bookplate, host a party and let the honored children be the first to check out those books.
- * Reading clubs/book groups after school (some with incentives through or support from local business).
- * Spanish classes for kids (other languages or topics work, too).
- * Summer Reading programs, most often the Missouri State Library program
- * Summer reading signs up groups (YMCA camp, for example) as well as individuals.
- * Day care centers and summer camps sign kids up for summer reading, and help kids meet their goals.
- * After school programs are regularly scheduled, or a library staff member goes to them with a reading-related activity on a regular schedule; sometimes this is done in collaboration with the school library.
- * Winter reading programs. Refer to all those past summer reading manuals for ideas.
- * Writing contest for kids. Letters About Literature is a national one, with a statewide level contest as well (<http://loc.gov/letters>).
- * Team reading events or contests that let struggling readers participate along with with more fluent readers.
- * Reading events or contests where a group of friends or other groups such as Brownie troops enter as a group. This mixes struggling and fluent readers and makes the good readers peer group models while it lets slower readers get in on the fun.
- * Facilitate and/or host reading emphasis programs involving athletes from local colleges, or even occasionally a professional athlete.
- * Acquiring materials that go with *Accelerated Reader*, *Reading Recovery*, etc., that are used in the local school; some headaches go with this but it does get the kids who need to be reading to read and come to the library.
- * Reading and other educational software available on computers.
- * *Reading Is Fundamental* (RIF) programs.

- * Home schooling programs and services.
- * Teen classes/groups for books or hobby or interest groups.
- * Activity alternatives to the television.
- * Math materials, answers, and games.
- * Teen summer reading with incentives from local businesses.

FAMILIES

- * Family Nights at the Library and other family programming.
- * *Parents As Teachers (PAT)* or *Practical Parenting Partnership (PPP)* cooperation.
- * ‘Help your child read’ packets for parents, with suggestions for games, word lists, etc; the material in these kits is at a low adult reading level.
- * Obtain a grant to keep the school library open as a substitute or adjunct to the public library.
- * One library has book exchange racks in a local coffee shop and Laundromat.
- * A few libraries have done the ‘Read from the Start’ program with the Missouri Humanities Council, or other national grant programs such as Prime Time or PBS Between the Lions. Some have also adapted ALA’s Born to Read or Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library for their localities.
- * Give new parents a bag of infant books and parenting materials; some libraries do this through a hospital and others do it directly. Also consider giving siblings with new brothers or sisters some books and a bag, too.
- * Place short books at all reading levels in places where people have to wait: the doctor’s office, social services offices, clinics, etc.
- * Have reading events for families or groups of siblings (great for home schoolers).
- * Find events where book give-aways or prizes are appropriate, such as trick or treat at the library or community festivals.
- * Include books in holiday food baskets given to families by other community organizations.

**For additional
information,
please contact:**

Missouri State Library
Library Development Division
600 W. Main, PO Box 387
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Phone: 1-800-325-0131
(toll-free in Missouri)
or (573) 522-9564
Fax: (573) 751-3612
www.sos.mo.gov/library